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DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR
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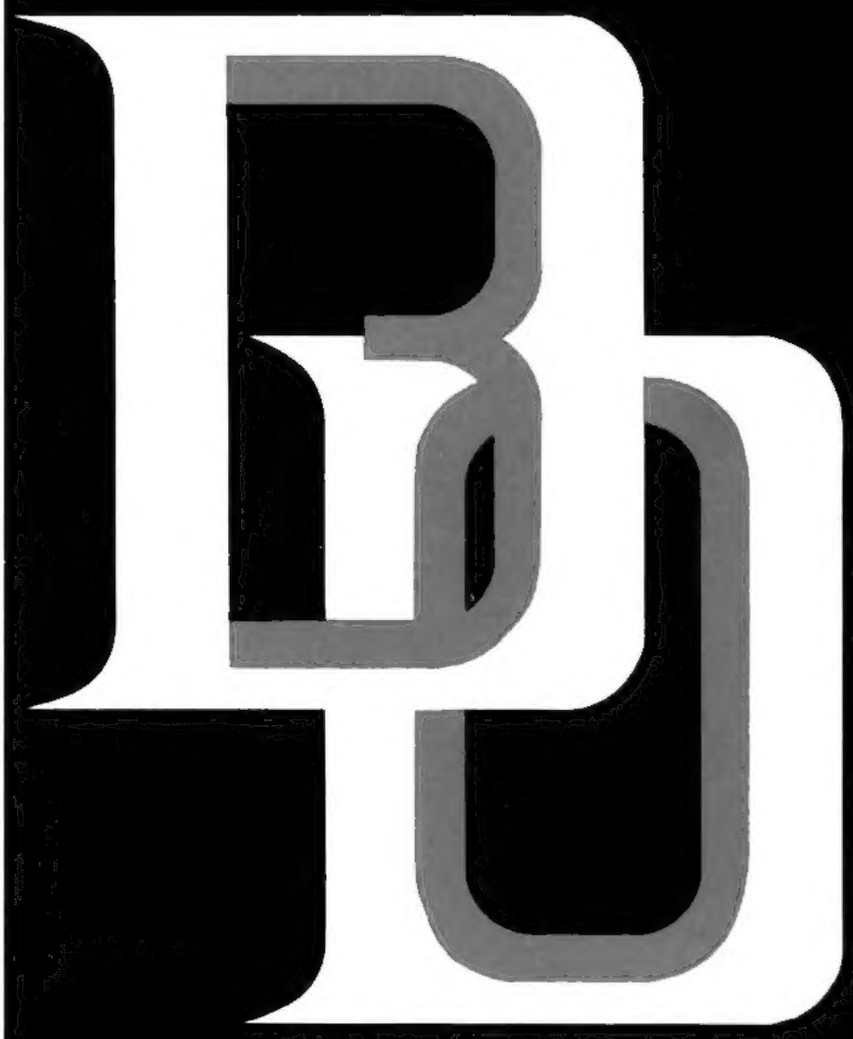
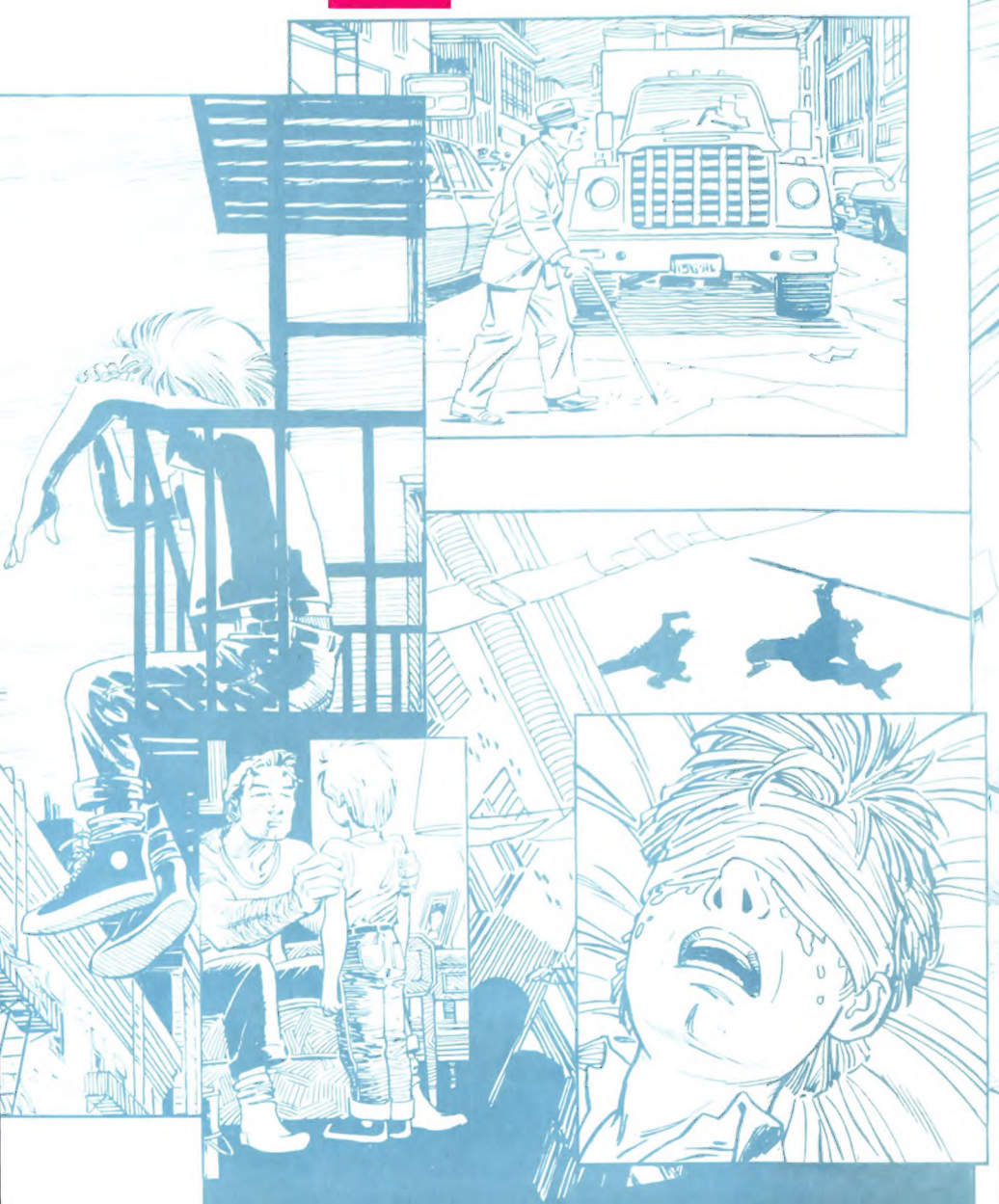


DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR



OF THINGS CRIMSON AND COLLABORATIVE

What a way to celebrate your thirtieth anniversary! This slim volume had its genesis some four years ago when a talented gent by the name of Frank Miller called me and said he was itching to do a DAREDEVIL project again. If I remember correctly, he'd been contacted by then-DAREDEVIL penciler, John Romita Jr., who was anxious to work with the Lanky One on a dressed-to-kill one-shot. Having seen the results of Frank's prior pairing with Bill Sienkiewicz, and, later, David Mazzucchelli, I didn't need much convincing. Frank and John set out to do the definitive, all-inclusive origin of the Man Without Fear. In a short period, Frank turned around a superb sixty-four page plot that left me panting for more. And so more I requested. Frank and John (who collaborated on this) responded by conceiving whole new sequences, and drastically expanding the existing ones. The mind-wrenching result is a one-hundred and forty-four page *tour de force*, sure to stand as a milestone in this beloved character's long and proud history. And when John had completed his Herculean drawing labors, the truly extraordinary pages (actually xeroxes thereof) were sent to Mr. Miller.

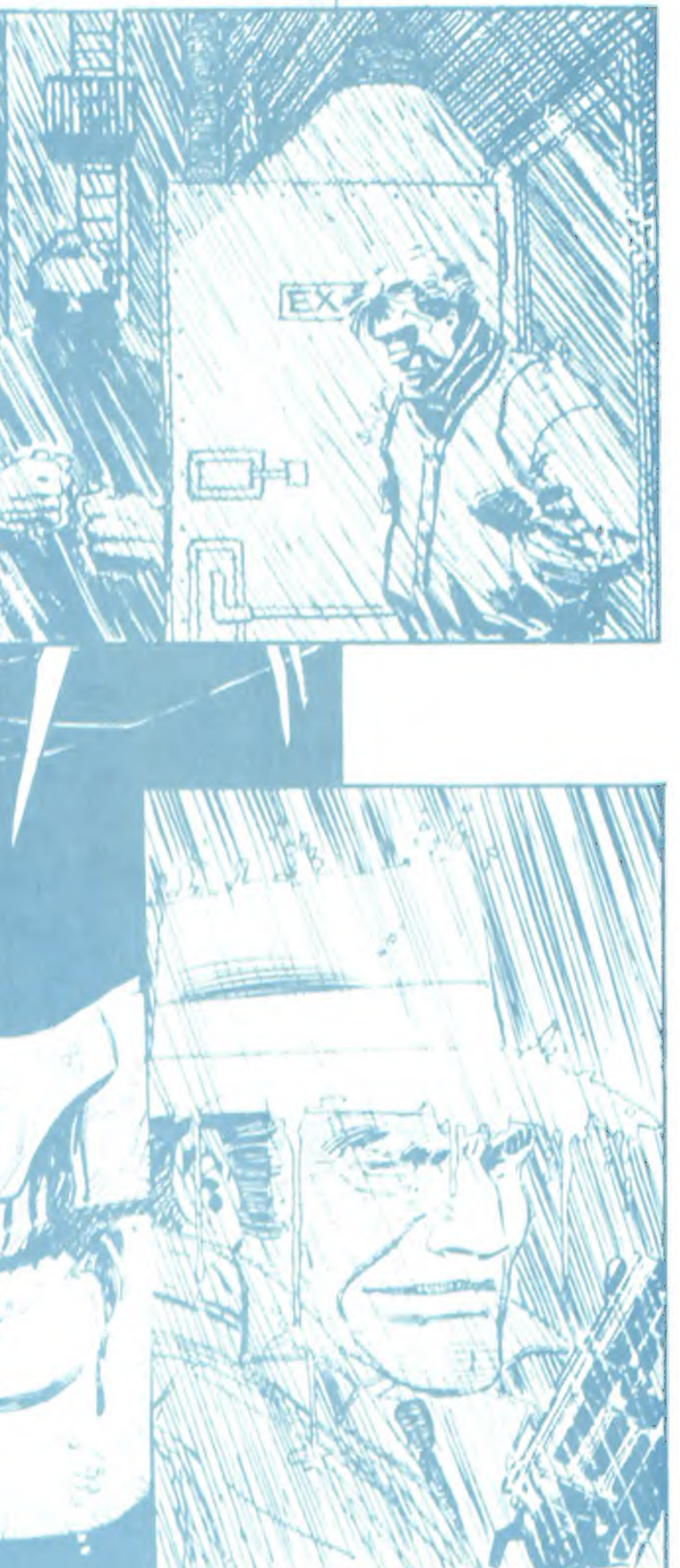
Meanwhile, I was busy lining up three other long-time DAREDEVIL co-conspirators: Al Williamson, Joe Rosen, and Christie Scheele. Happily, all were only too pleased to become a part of our mammoth undertaking. And while the aforementioned trio sharpened (figuratively) their pens and brushes, Frank Miller completed one of the finest scripts in his more than decade long association with DAREDEVIL. And how could he help but do first-rate scrivening, inspired as he was by John's pencils. Joe Rosen did his usual exceptional lettering. He's one of the

unsung heroes of our biz. Top pro Al Williamson lovingly rendered John's matchless pencils, giving the book a look that's the envy of any artist who's come in to see the completed pages. (And there've been plenty!) Naturally, Christie Scheele (who still toils on the monthly D.D. title) put the icing on the cake, injecting the art with an added dimension of excellence, utilizing an array of color combinations as impressive as they are innovative. And, not to forget my able and often under-appreciated assistant, Pat Garrahy, who worked with John to masterfully break the epic into the five segments it ultimately became. And, Pat's even now aiding me in ensuring that this five book series sees print in as perfect a condition as editorially possible. Thanks to one and all—especially big boss Tom DeFalco, for giving us the go-ahead on this monumental venture.

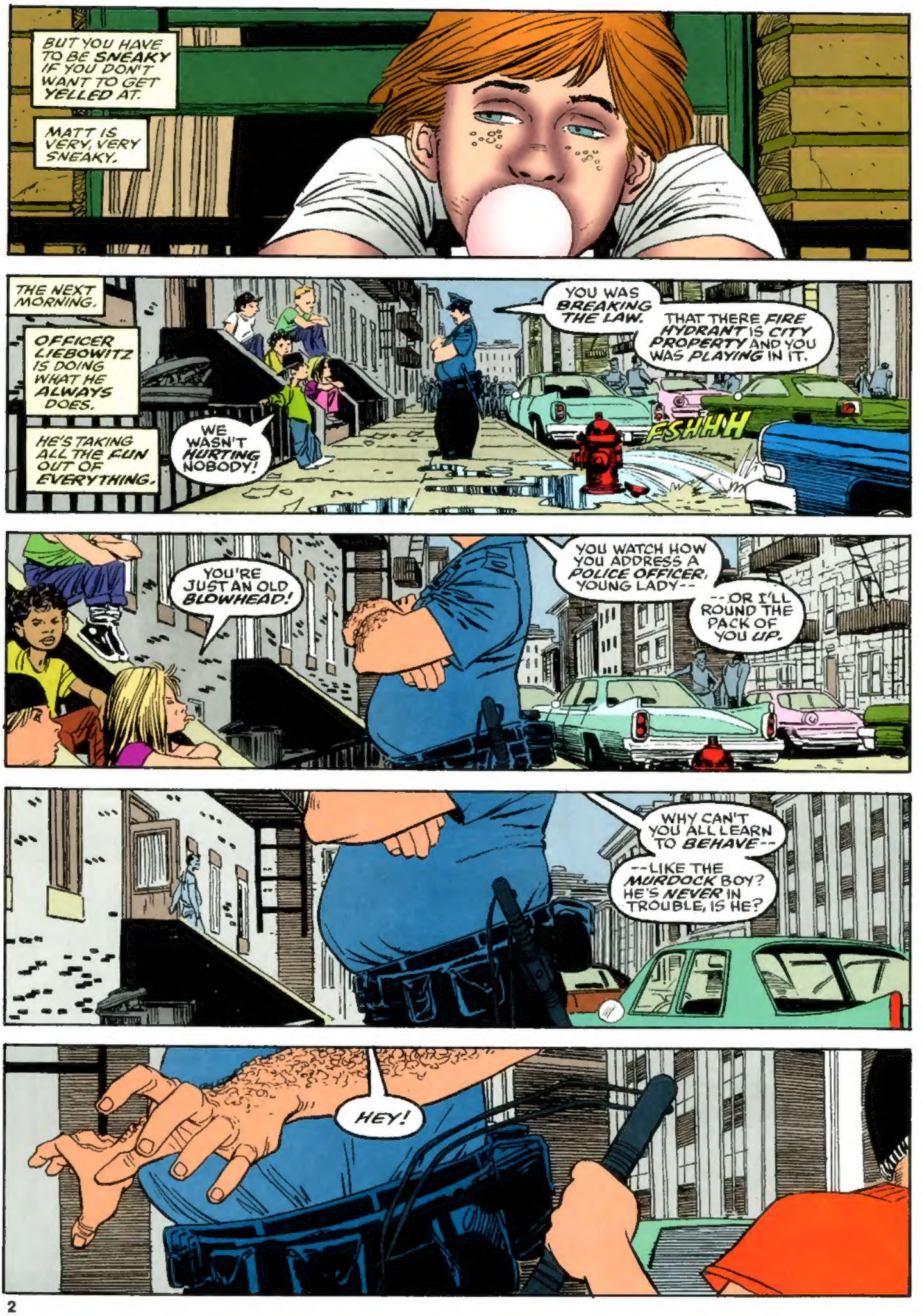
And a special tip of the horned cowl to Matthew Murdock himself, a childhood hero of mine, whose exploits as the supreme swashbuckler in comics afforded me endless hours of entertainment. This is your story, mister, and we're proud as can be to present it. You bet!

Of course, none of this would even exist were it not for the initial creativity of those twin titans, Stan Lee and the late Bill Everett, who first breathed life into the eternally compelling saga of the Man Without Fear. And thirty years later, their work on DAREDEVIL, (expanded and embellished though it's been) retains the power and luster only a true classic can possess. More than ever, the world needs heroes; men and women whose courage and compassion exalt their stature and let us see through the fog of everyday life to a higher purpose. Let me tell you, they don't come any more courageous, noble—or mortal than our Matthew Murdock. And it's time you found out why!

—Ralph Macchio

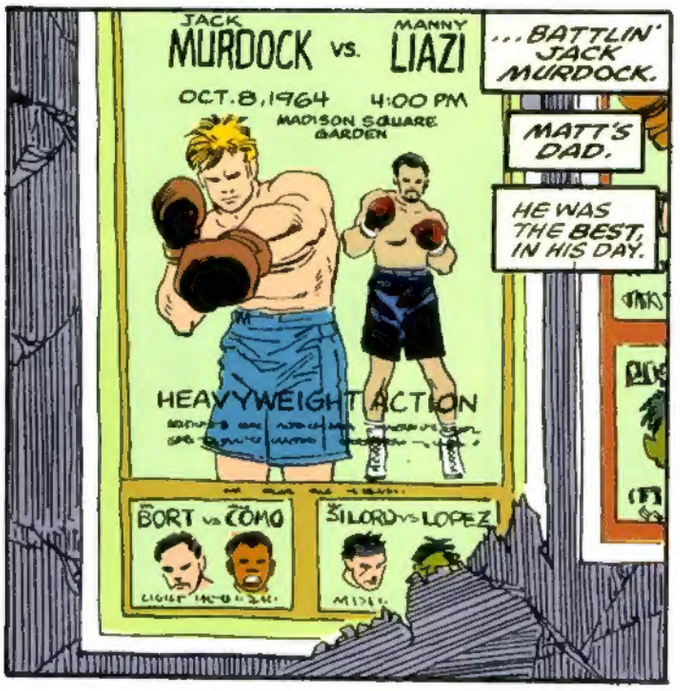


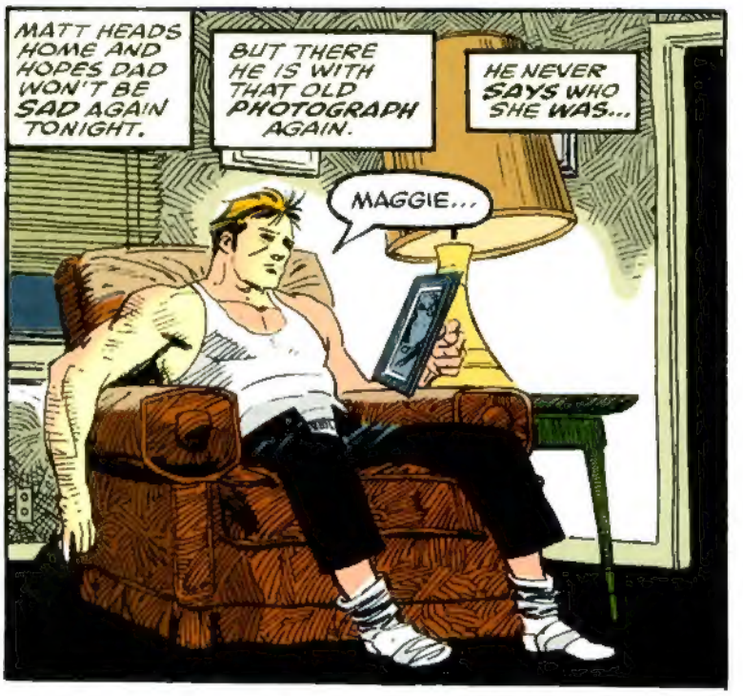
SUMMERTIME, IN THE MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOOD OF HELL'S KITCHEN.
THE DAYS ARE BRIGHT AND HOT AND FULL OF MISCHIEF.
AND THE NIGHTS ARE COOL AND RESTLESS, WITH THE HUM OF THE CITY CALLING TO THIS BOY, THIS MATT MURDOCK.
CALLING TO HIM, PROMISING HIM SOMETHING HE CANNOT YET UNDERSTAND.
SOON DAD WILL CALL HIM IN AND MATT WILL TOSS UNDER COVERS AND STARE INTO THE NIGHT SKY...
...AND WAIT FOR THE DAWN.
AND MORE MISCHIEF.


BUT YOU HAVE TO BE SNEAKY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET YELLED AT.
MATT IS VERY, VERY SNEAKY.
THE NEXT MORNING.
OFFICER LIEBOWITZ IS DOING WHAT HE ALWAYS DOES.
HE'S TAKING ALL THE FUN OUT OF EVERYTHING.
WE WASN'T HURTING NOBODY!
YOU WAS BREAKING THE LAW.
THAT THERE FIRE HYDRANT IS CITY PROPERTY AND YOU WAS PLAYING IN IT.
FSHHHH
YOU'RE JUST AN OLD BLOWHEAD!
YOU WATCH HOW YOU ADDRESS A POLICE OFFICER, YOUNG LADY--
--OR I'LL ROUND THE PACK OF YOU UP.
WHY CAN'T YOU ALL LEARN TO BEHAVE--
--LIKE THE MURDOCK BOY? HE'S NEVER IN TROUBLE, IS HE?
HEY!

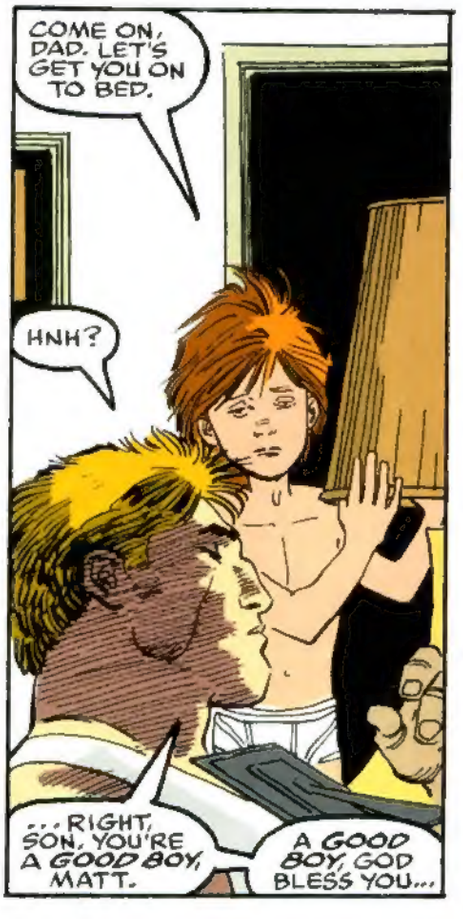
COME BACK HERE!
GO! GO! GO!
THAT THERE CLUB IS CITY PROPERTY!
HUFF HUFF HUFF
WHO WAS THAT KID?...
THE BOY'S HEART FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE.
IT'S A GREAT FEELING.
BUT DAD WOULD BE REALLY SORE IF HE KNEW WHAT MATT'S DONE.
SO MATT TAKES THE NIGHTSTICK TO HIS FAVORITE PLACE.
A PLACE THAT SMELLS OF SAWDUST AND OLD SWEAT.
THE GYM.

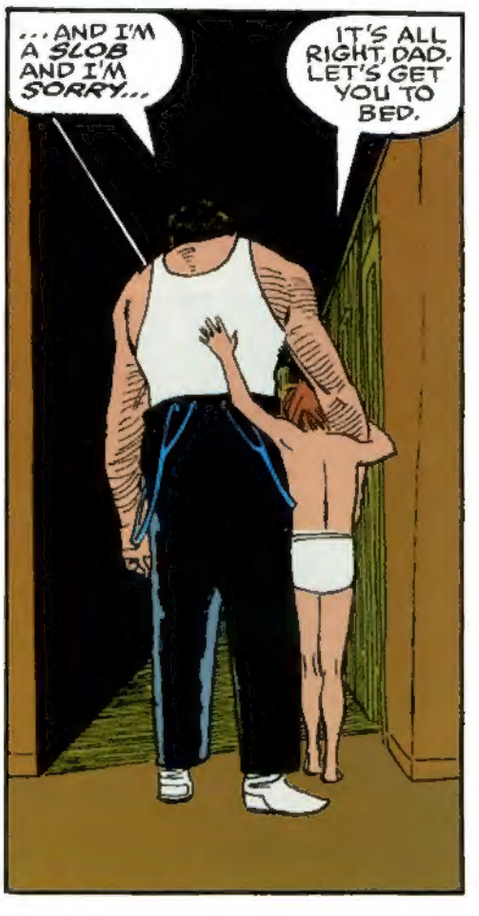
MOST OF THE LOCKERS ARE EMPTY, THESE DAYS.
BUT THE GYM STILL CARRIES THE SMELLS--
--AND THE ECHOES OF PAST GLORY.
YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR THE CROWD CHEERING ON THEIR CHAMPION...

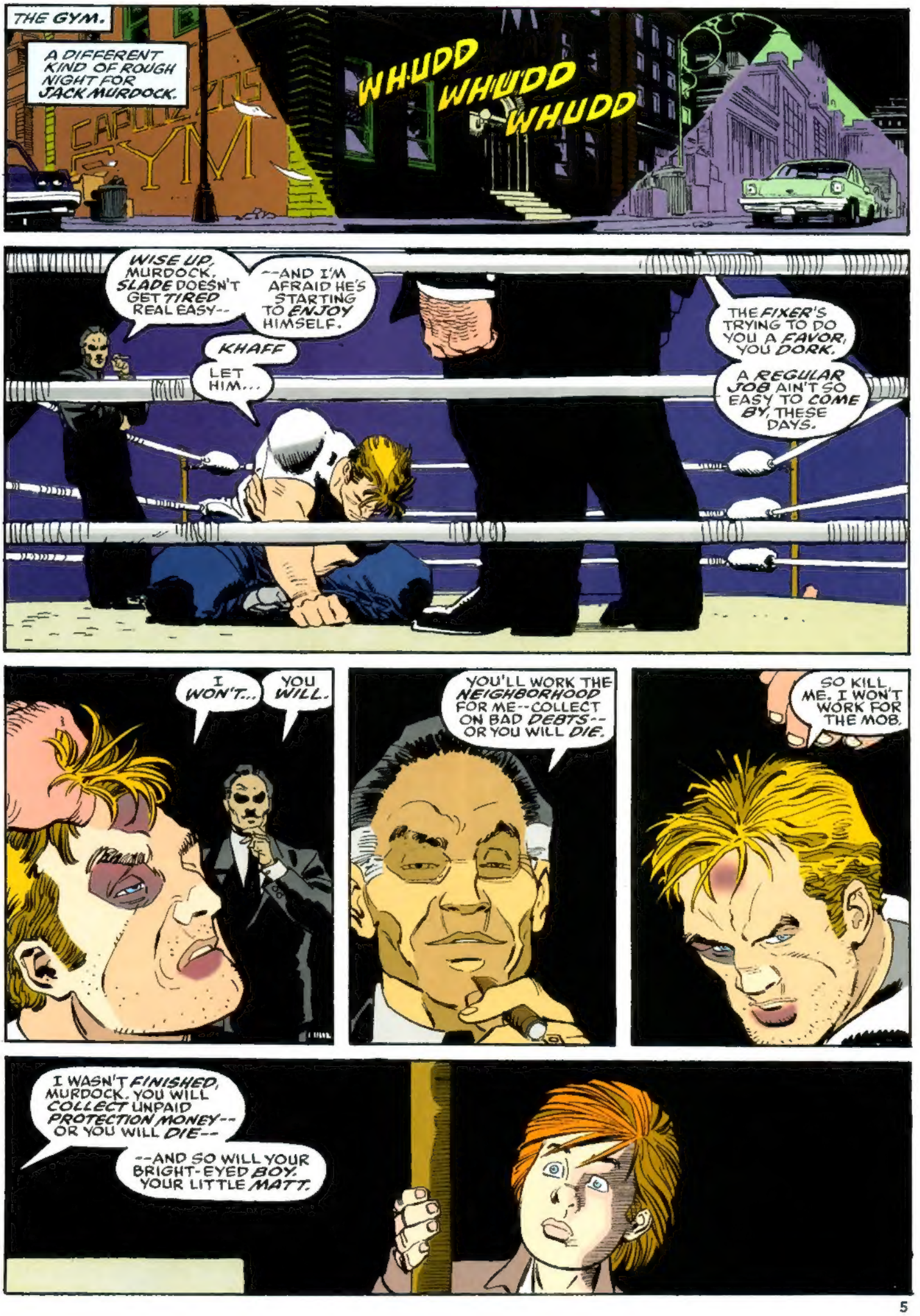

JACK MURDOCK VS. MANNY LIAZI
OCT. 8, 1964 4:00 PM
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
HEAVYWEIGHT ACTION
BORT vs COMO
SILORD vs LOPEZ
...BATTLIN' JACK MURDOCK.
MATT'S DAD.
HE WAS THE BEST, IN HIS DAY.

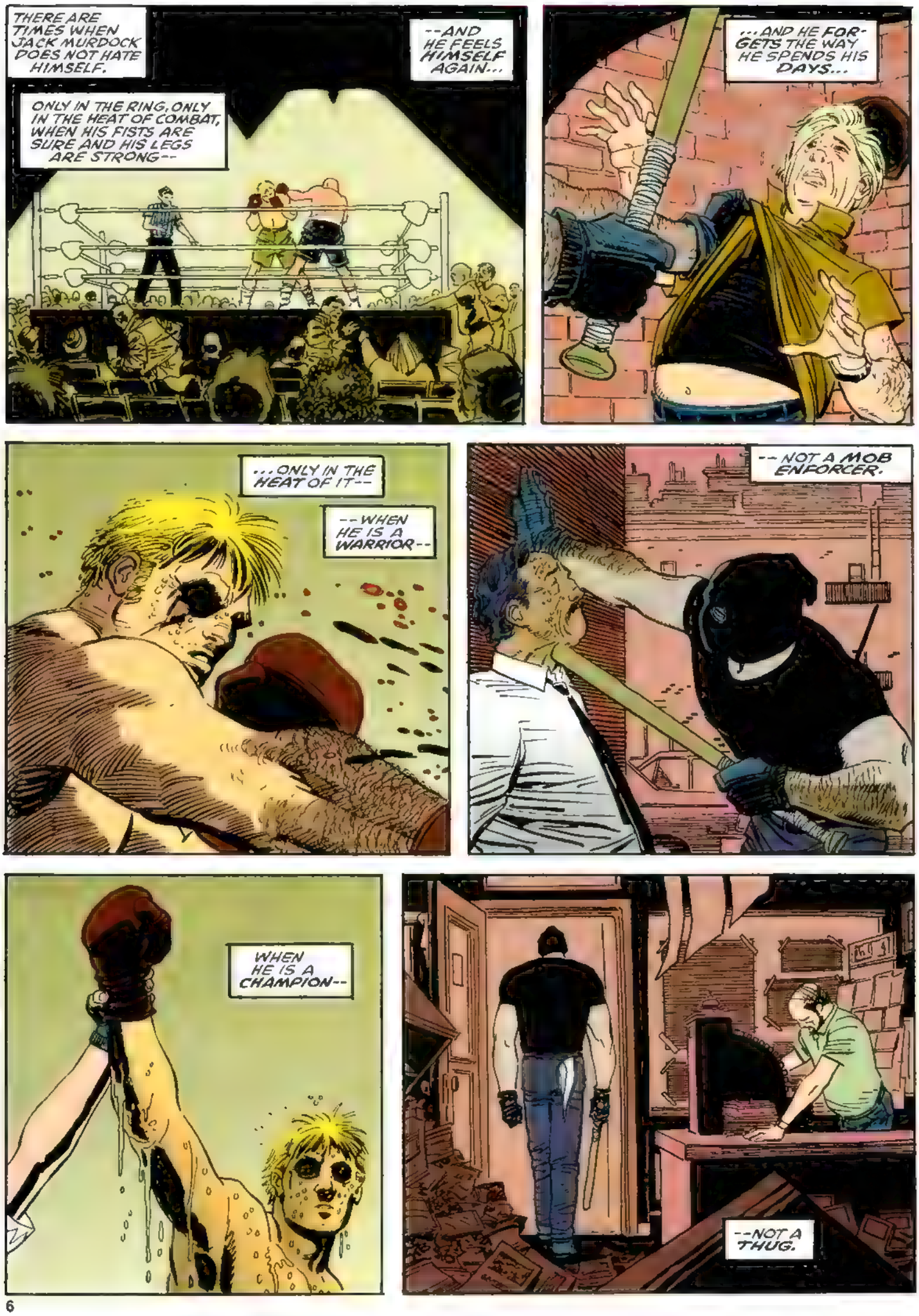

MATT HEADS HOME AND HOPES DAD WON'T BE SAD AGAIN TONIGHT.
BUT THERE HE IS WITH THAT OLD PHOTOGRAPH AGAIN.
HE NEVER SAYS WHO SHE WAS...
MAGGIE...

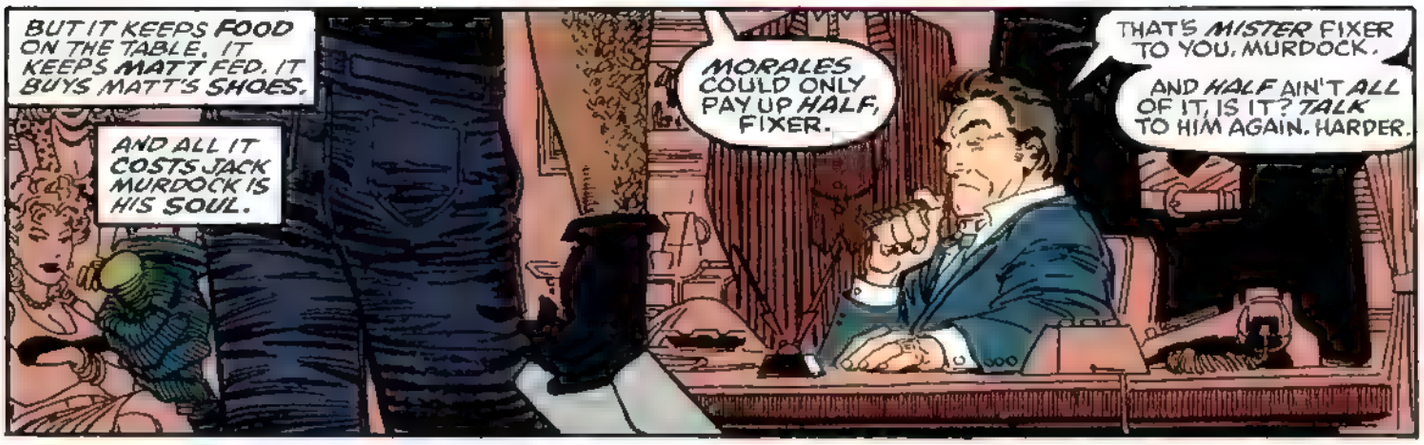
...I'M SORRY, MAGGIE... I'M...


COME ON, DAD. LET'S GET YOU ON TO BED.
HNH?
...RIGHT, SON. YOU'RE A GOOD BOY, MATT.
A GOOD BOY, GOD BLESS YOU...

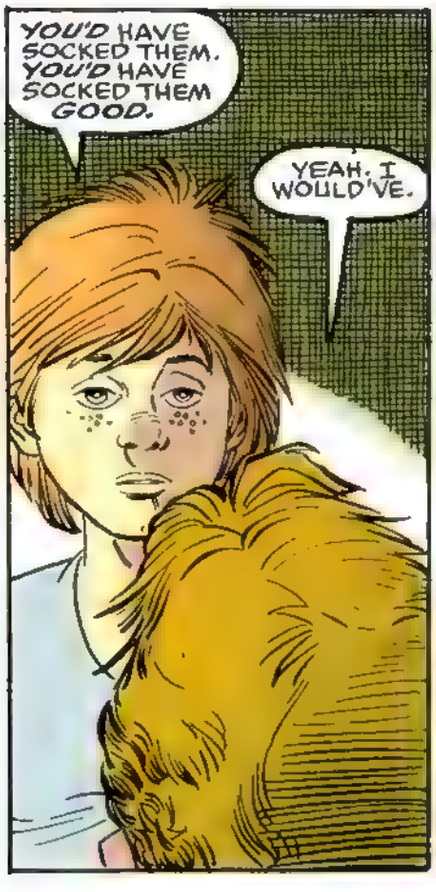

...AND I'M A SLOB AND I'M SORRY...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DAD. LET'S GET YOU TO BED.

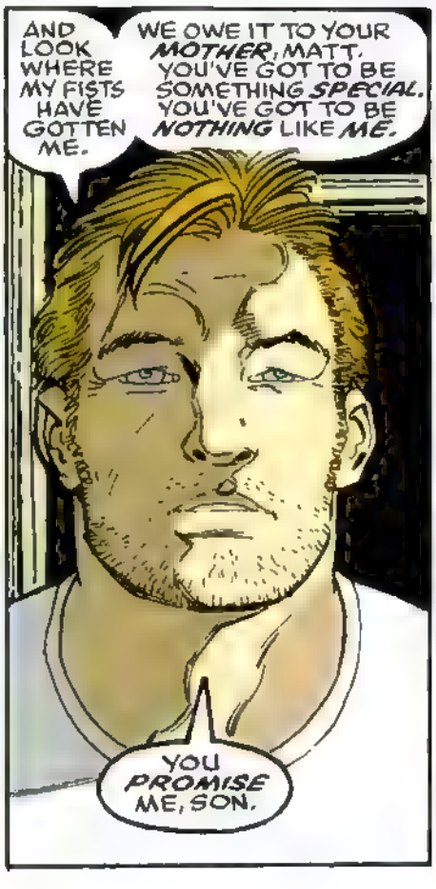

THE GYM.
A DIFFERENT KIND OF ROUGH NIGHT FOR JACK MURDOCK.
WHUDD WHUDD WHUDD
WISE UP, MURDOCK. SLADE DOESN'T GET TIRED REAL EASY--
--AND I'M AFRAID HE'S STARTING TO ENJOY HIMSELF.
KHAFF
LET HIM...
THE FIXER'S TRYING TO DO YOU A FAVOR, YOU DORK.
A REGULAR JOB AIN'T SO EASY TO COME BY, THESE DAYS.
I WON'T...
YOU WILL.
YOU'LL WORK THE NEIGHBORHOOD FOR ME--COLLECT ON BAD DEBTS--OR YOU WILL DIE.
SO KILL ME. I WON'T WORK FOR THE MOB.
I WASN'T FINISHED, MURDOCK. YOU WILL COLLECT UNPAID PROTECTION MONEY--OR YOU WILL DIE--
--AND SO WILL YOUR BRIGHT-EYED BOY. YOUR LITTLE MATT.


THERE ARE TIMES WHEN JACK MURDOCK DOES NOT HATE HIMSELF.
ONLY IN THE RING, ONLY IN THE HEAT OF COMBAT, WHEN HIS FISTS ARE SURE AND HIS LEGS ARE STRONG--
--AND HE FEELS HIMSELF AGAIN...
...AND HE FORGETS THE WAY HE SPENDS HIS DAYS...
...ONLY IN THE HEAT OF IT--
--WHEN HE IS A WARRIOR--
--NOT A MOB ENFORCER.
WHEN HE IS A CHAMPION--
--NOT A THUG.

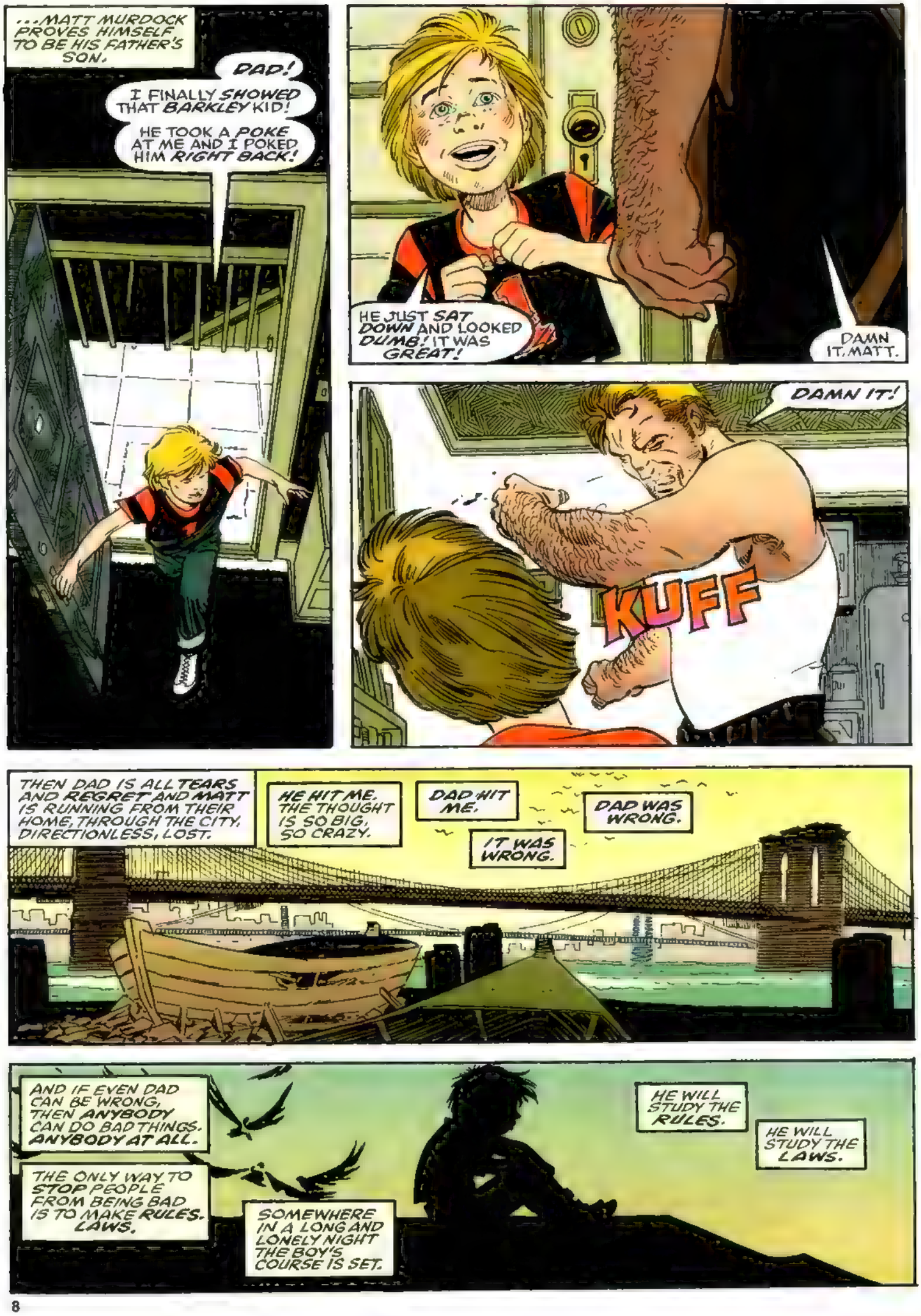

BUT IT KEEPS FOOD ON THE TABLE. IT KEEPS MATT FED. IT BUYS MATT'S SHOES.
AND ALL IT COSTS JACK MURDOCK IS HIS SOUL.
MORALES COULD ONLY PAY UP HALF, FIXER.
THAT'S MISTER FIXER TO YOU, MURDOCK.
AND HALF AIN'T ALL OF IT, IS IT? TALK TO HIM AGAIN. HARDER.

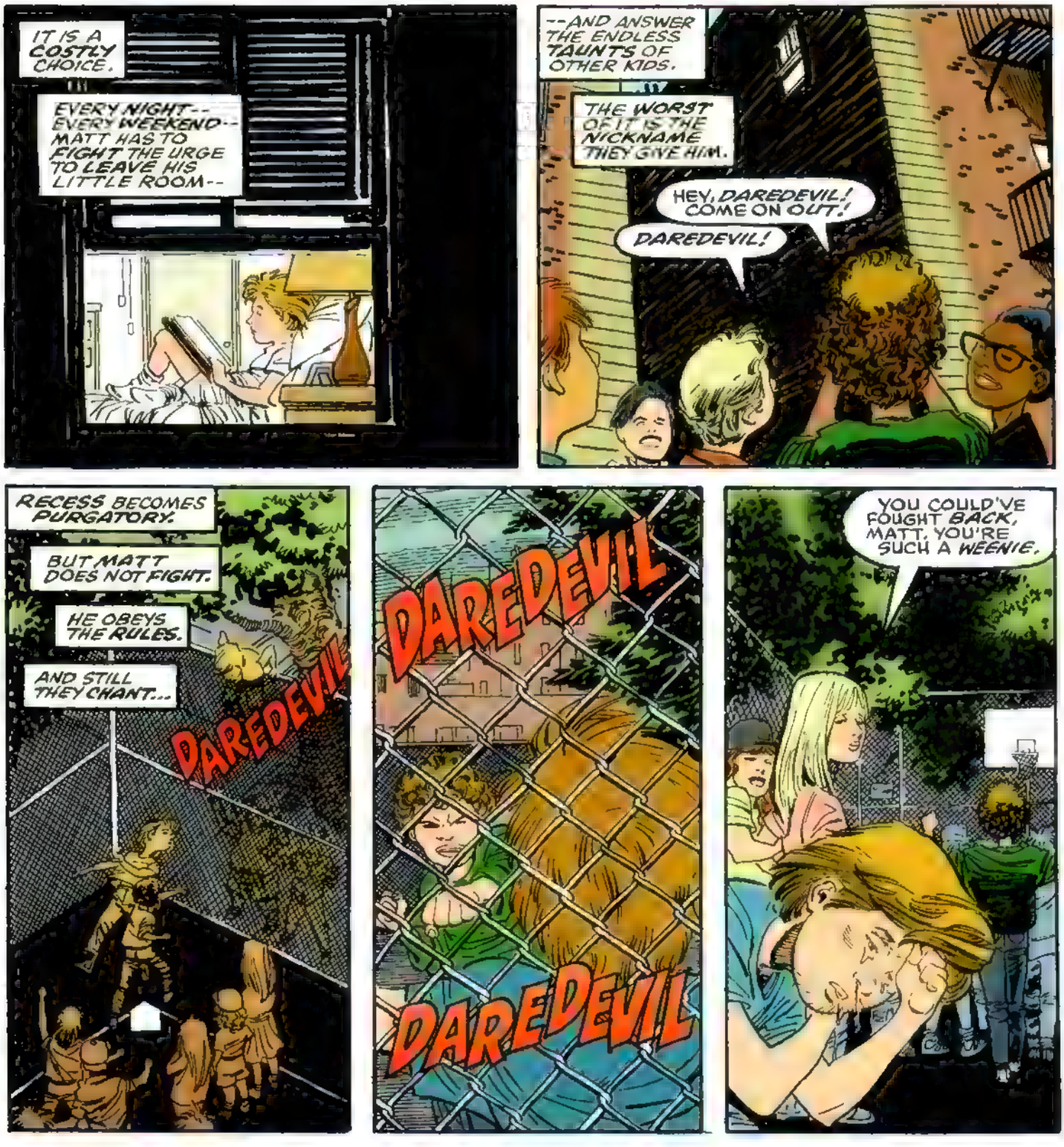
HOME, AND MATT.
YOU PROMISE ME, SON.
BUT I CAN'T STUDY ALL THE TIME, DAD.
AND THE GUYS -- THEY CALL ME A SISSY. IT MAKES ME REALLY MAD.
IT MAKES ME WANT TO SOCK THEM AND I DON'T SEE ANY REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T.

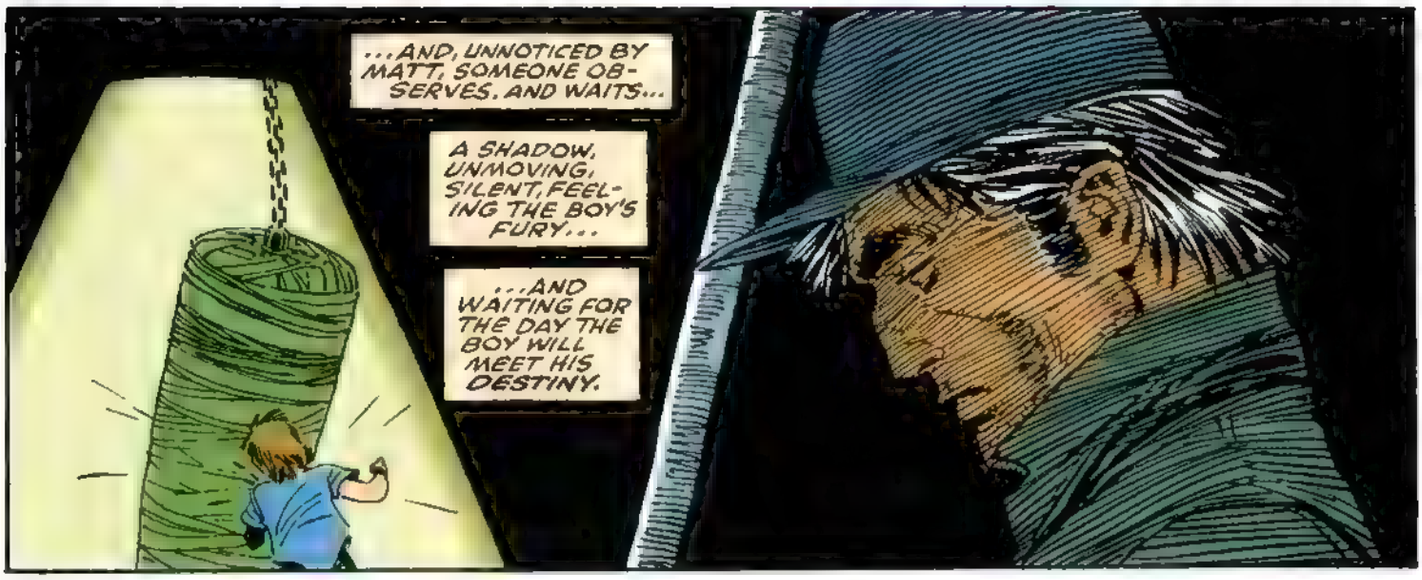

YOU'D HAVE SOCKED THEM. YOU'D HAVE SOCKED THEM GOOD.
YEAH. I WOULD'VE.

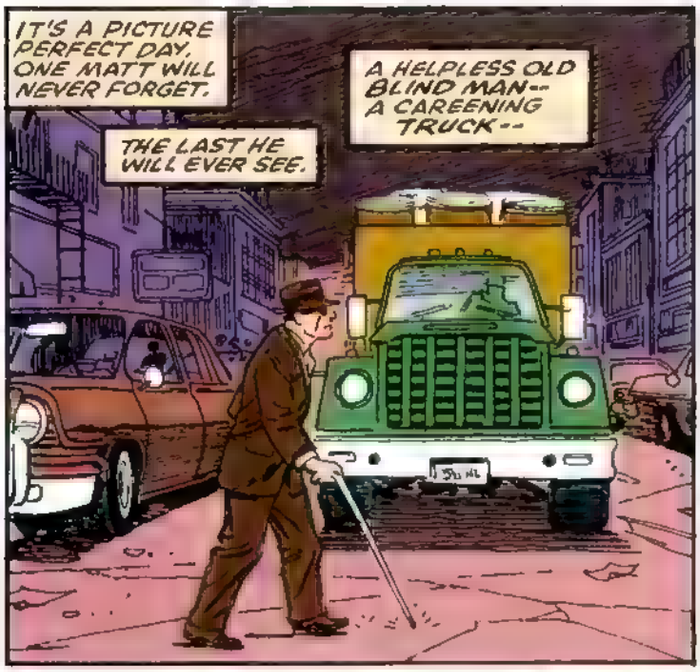

AND LOOK WHERE MY FISTS HAVE GOTTEN ME.
WE OWE IT TO YOUR MOTHER, MATT. YOU'VE GOT TO BE SOMETHING SPECIAL. YOU'VE GOT TO BE NOTHING LIKE ME.
YOU PROMISE ME, SON.

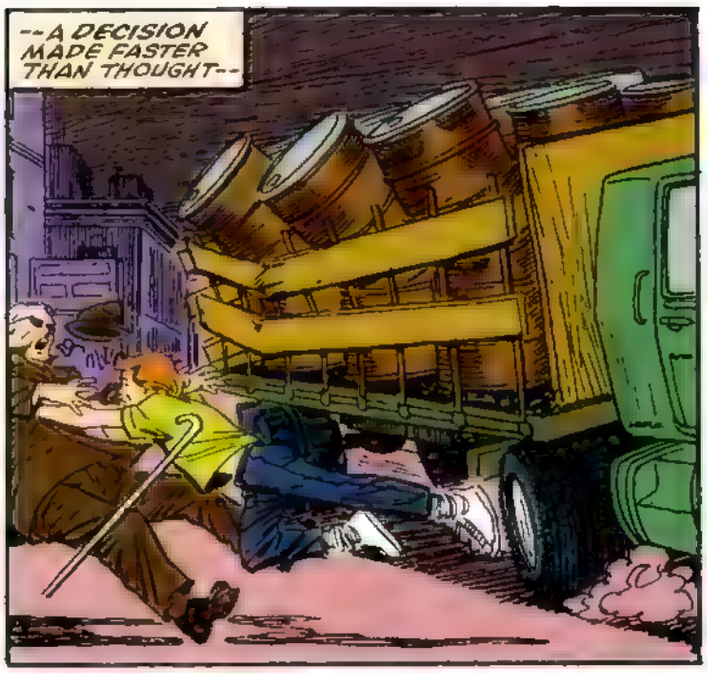
MATT PROMISES--
--BUT, A FEW WEEKS LATER, ON THE KIND OF DAY WHEN THE NEW YORK HEAT BRINGS RAISED VOICES AND CLENCHED FISTS...

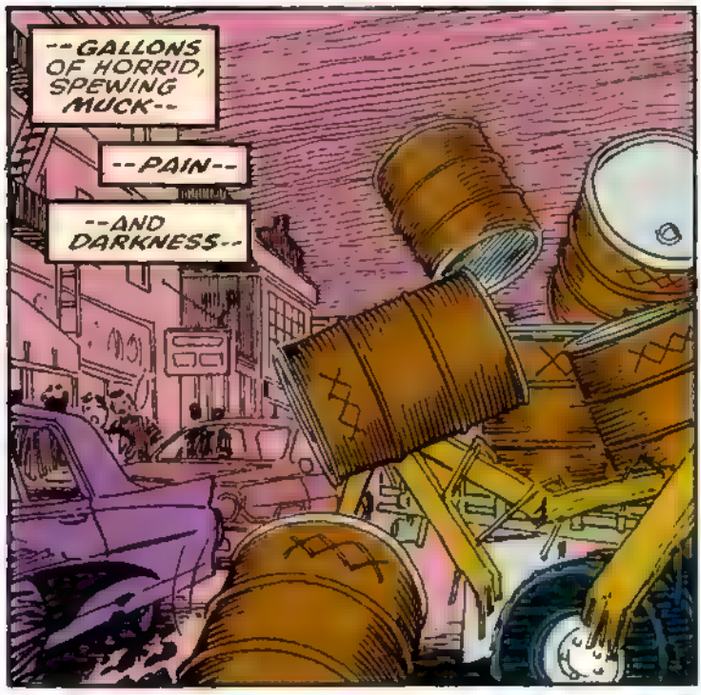

...MATT MURDOCK PROVES HIMSELF TO BE HIS FATHER'S SON.
DAD!
I FINALLY SHOWED THAT BARKLEY KID!
HE TOOK A POKE AT ME AND I POKED HIM RIGHT BACK!
HE JUST SAT DOWN AND LOOKED DUMB! IT WAS GREAT!
DAMN IT, MATT.
DAMN IT!
KUFF
THEN DAD IS ALL TEARS AND REGRET AND MATT IS RUNNING FROM THEIR HOME, THROUGH THE CITY, DIRECTIONLESS, LOST.
HE HIT ME. THE THOUGHT IS SO BIG, SO CRAZY.
DAD HIT ME.
IT WAS WRONG.
DAD WAS WRONG.
AND IF EVEN DAD CAN BE WRONG, THEN ANYBODY CAN DO BAD THINGS. ANYBODY AT ALL.
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP PEOPLE FROM BEING BAD IS TO MAKE RULES. LAWS.
SOMEWHERE IN A LONG AND LONELY NIGHT THE BOY'S COURSE IS SET.
HE WILL STUDY THE RULES.
HE WILL STUDY THE LAWS.


IT IS A COSTLY CHOICE.
EVERY NIGHT-- EVERY WEEKEND-- MATT HAS TO FIGHT THE URGE TO LEAVE HIS LITTLE ROOM--
--AND ANSWER THE ENDLESS TAUNTS OF OTHER KIDS.
THE WORST OF IT IS THE NICKNAME THEY GIVE HIM.
HEY, DAREDEVIL! COME ON OUT!
DAREDEVIL!
RECESS BECOMES PURGATORY.
BUT MATT DOES NOT FIGHT.
HE OBEYS THE RULES.
AND STILL THEY CHANT...
DAREDEVIL
DAREDEVIL
DAREDEVIL
YOU COULD'VE FOUGHT BACK, MATT. YOU'RE SUCH A WEENIE.
HIS FAVORITE PLACE,
THE GYM.
ENDLESS STOLEN HOURS,
AT THE BAG.
HIS SECRET TIME--
--WHEN HIS FISTS ARE LIKE MACHINE GUN FIRE--DROWNING OUT HIS ANGRY SOBS...


...AND, UNNOTICED BY MATT, SOMEONE OBSERVES. AND WAITS...
A SHADOW, UNMOVING, SILENT, FEELING THE BOY'S FURY...
...AND WAITING FOR THE DAY THE BOY WILL MEET HIS DESTINY.


IT'S A PICTURE PERFECT DAY. ONE MATT WILL NEVER FORGET.
A HELPLESS OLD BLIND MAN-- A CAREENING TRUCK--
THE LAST HE WILL EVER SEE.


--A DECISION MADE FASTER THAN THOUGHT--


--GALLONS OF HORRID, SPEWING MUCK--
--PAIN--
--AND DARKNESS--

--BRAVEST THING I EVER SAW! BUT HIS FACE-- HIS EYES...
MY GOD-- THAT STUFF IN HIS EYES--
--IS IT RADIOACTIVE?
YES...

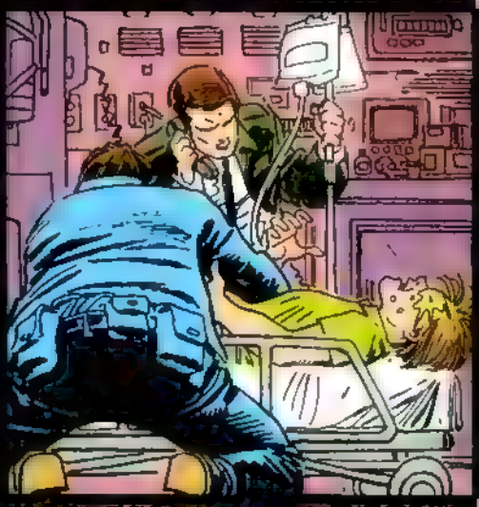
...YES. IT COURSES THROUGH HIS BLOOD. IT CHANGES HIM.

HIS BLOOD. IT BURNS...

...IT GUSHES THROUGH HIGH POWER HOSES AND SLAMS AGAINST THE BASE OF HIS SKULL.

EVERYTHING HURTS.

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.

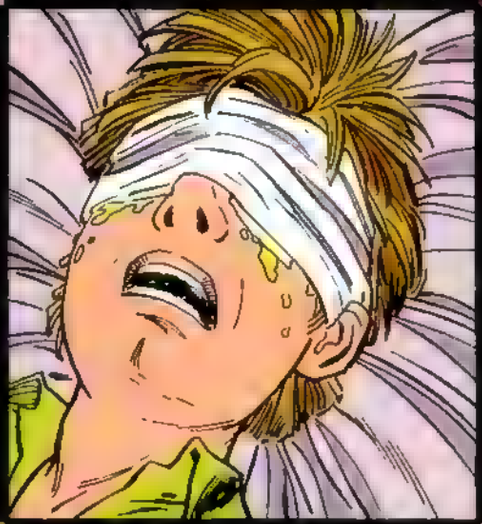


SANDPAPER SCRAPES HIS SKIN EVERY TIME HE MOVES--NO--NOT SANDPAPER--SHEETS--STARCHED SHEETS--

--AND THE SMELLS... CHEMICAL SMELLS. DISINFECTANTS.

HOSPITAL, HE THINKS. I'M IN A HOSPITAL.

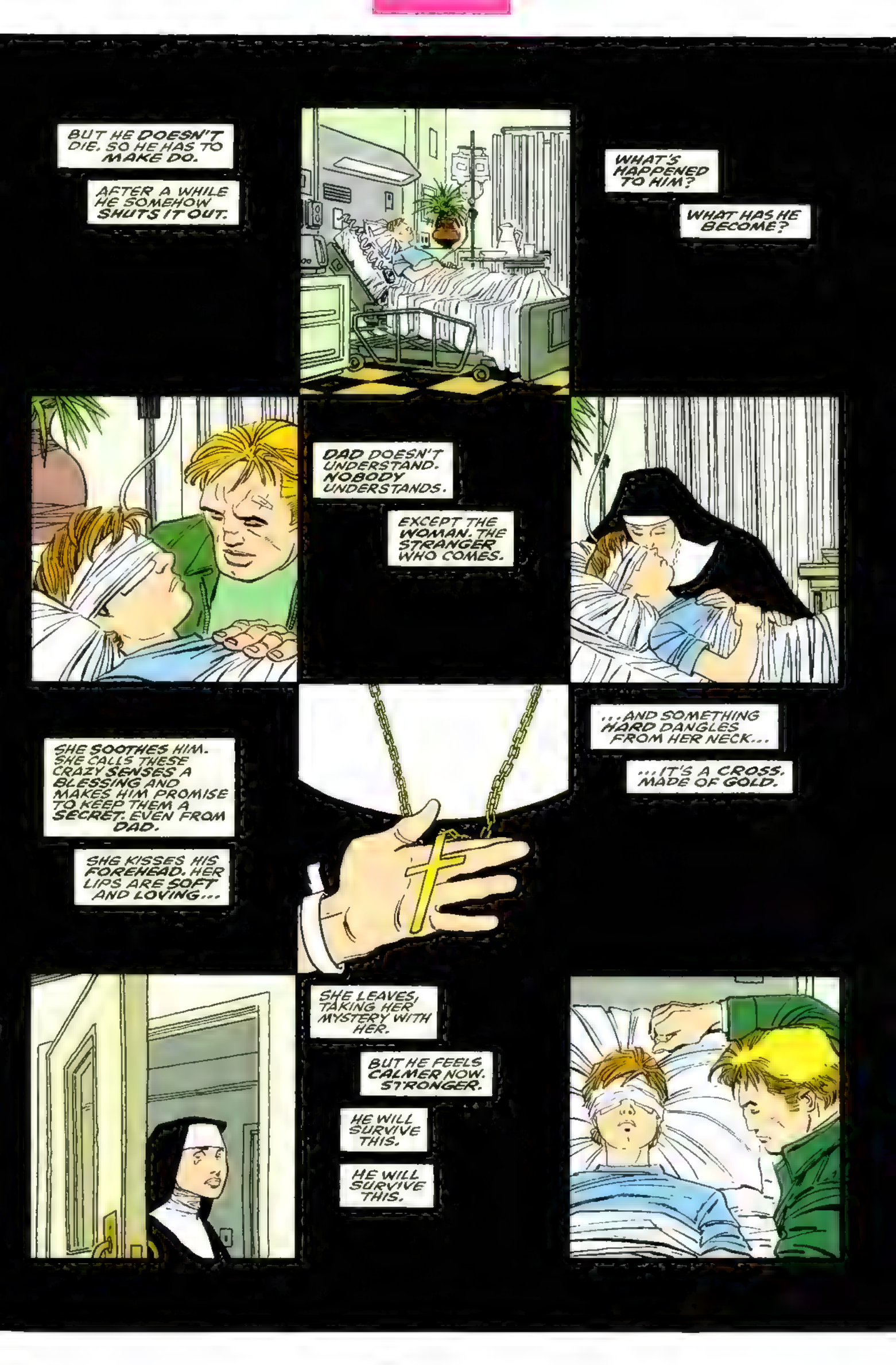
PEOPLE COME AND GO, SMELLING LIKE BATHTUBS FULL OF SWEAT--LIKE EATEN FOOD--LIKE ITALIAN SAUCES AND HALF-DIGESTED EGGS--

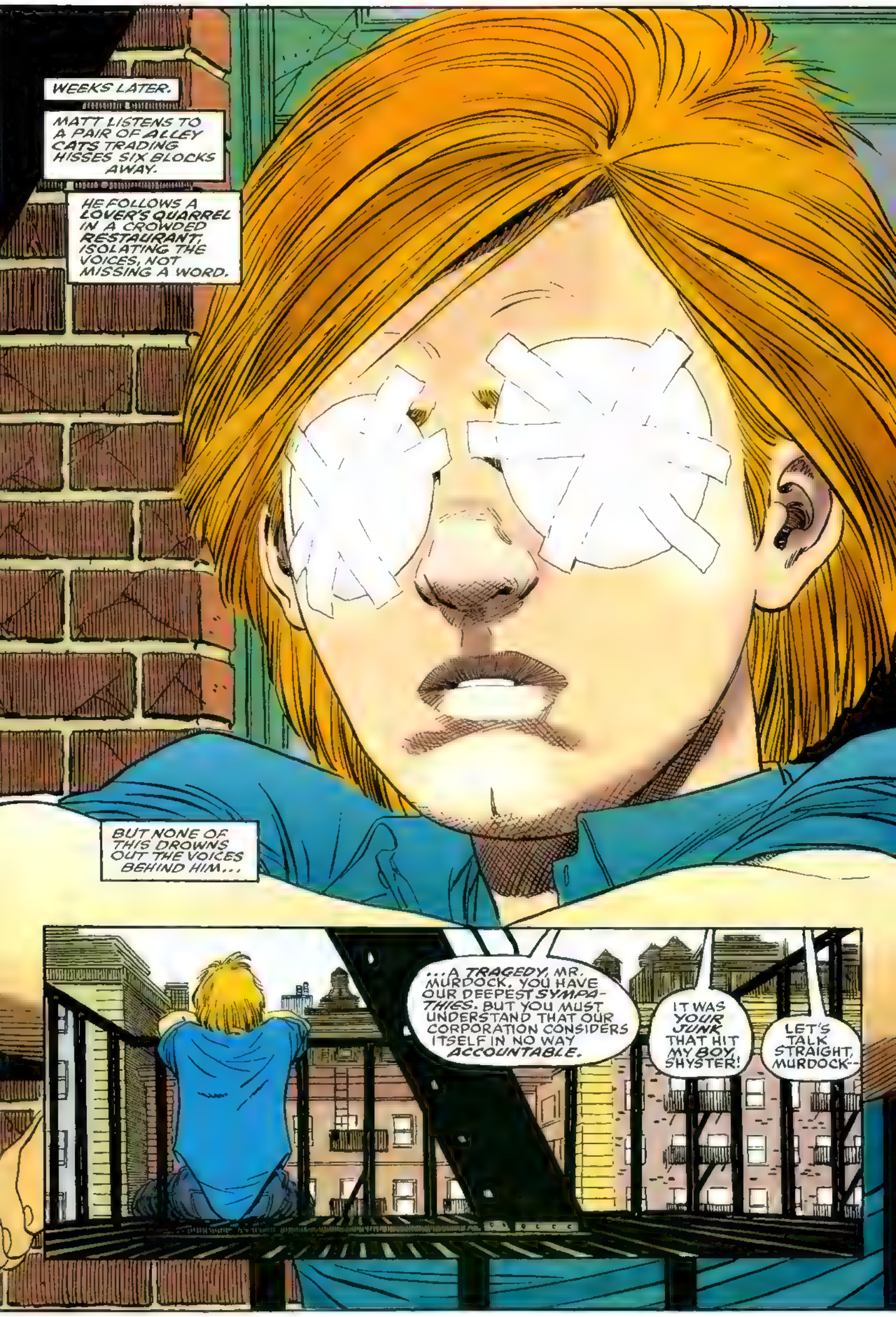


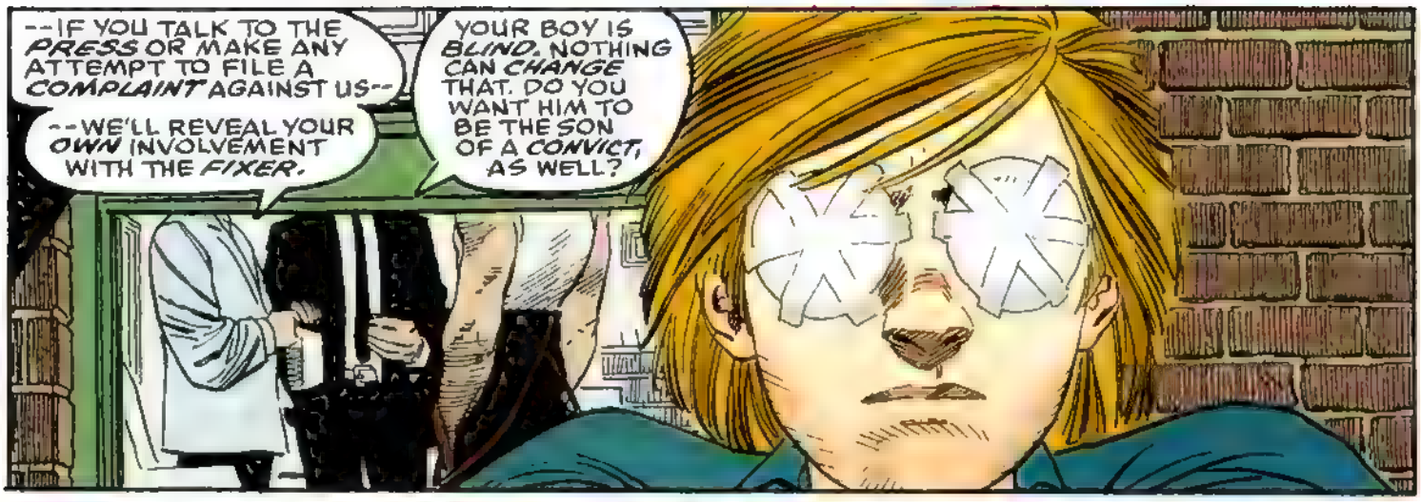
--THEY STAB HIM WITH NEEDLES AND FILL HIM FULL OF DRUGS BUT DRUGS DON'T FOOL HIM. HE KNOWS THEY CUT HIS FACE.

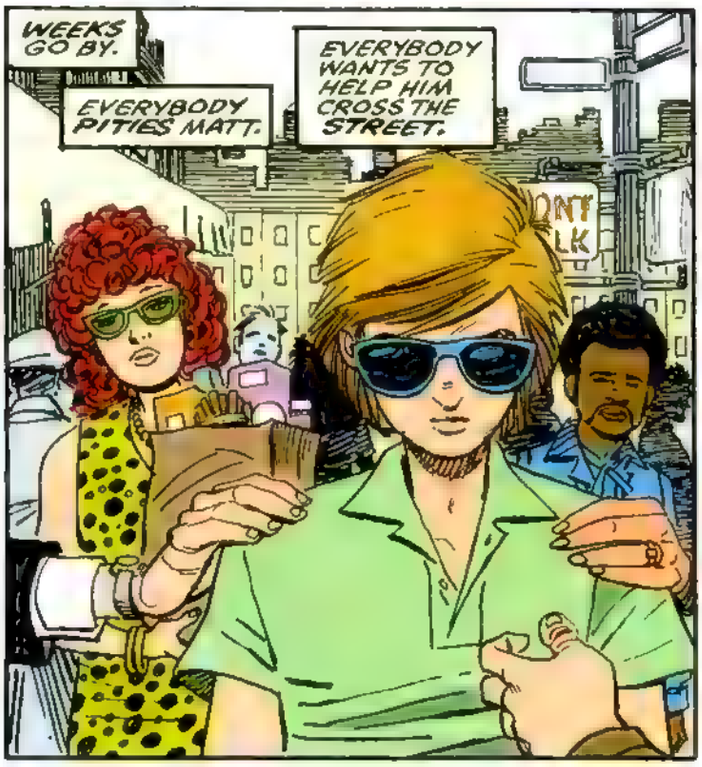
EVERYTHING HURTS.

ALL HE WANTS IS TO DIE.


BUT HE DOESN'T DIE. SO HE HAS TO MAKE DO.
AFTER A WHILE HE SOMEHOW SHUTS IT OUT.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
WHAT HAS HE BECOME?
DAD DOESN'T UNDERSTAND. NOBODY UNDERSTANDS.
EXCEPT THE WOMAN. THE STRANGER WHO COMES.
SHE SOOTHES HIM. SHE CALLS THESE CRAZY SENSES A BLESSING AND MAKES HIM PROMISE TO KEEP THEM A SECRET. EVEN FROM DAD.
SHE KISSES HIS FOREHEAD. HER LIPS ARE SOFT AND LOVING...
...AND SOMETHING HARD DANGLES FROM HER NECK...
...IT'S A CROSS. MADE OF GOLD.
SHE LEAVES, TAKING HER MYSTERY WITH HER.
BUT HE FEELS CALMER NOW. STRONGER.
HE WILL SURVIVE THIS.
HE WILL SURVIVE THIS.


WEEKS LATER.
MATT LISTENS TO A PAIR OF ALLEY CATS TRADING HISSES SIX BLOCKS AWAY.
HE FOLLOWS A LOVER'S QUARREL IN A CROWDED RESTAURANT, ISOLATING THE VOICES, NOT MISSING A WORD.
BUT NONE OF THIS DROWNS OUT THE VOICES BEHIND HIM...
...A TRAGEDY, MR. MURDOCK. YOU HAVE OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES. BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT OUR CORPORATION CONSIDERS ITSELF IN NO WAY ACCOUNTABLE.
IT WAS YOUR JUNK THAT HIT MY BOY, SHYSTER!
LET'S TALK STRAIGHT, MURDOCK--


--IF YOU TALK TO THE PRESS OR MAKE ANY ATTEMPT TO FILE A COMPLAINT AGAINST US--
--WE'LL REVEAL YOUR OWN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FIXER.
YOUR BOY IS BLIND. NOTHING CAN CHANGE THAT. DO YOU WANT HIM TO BE THE SON OF A CONVICT, AS WELL?

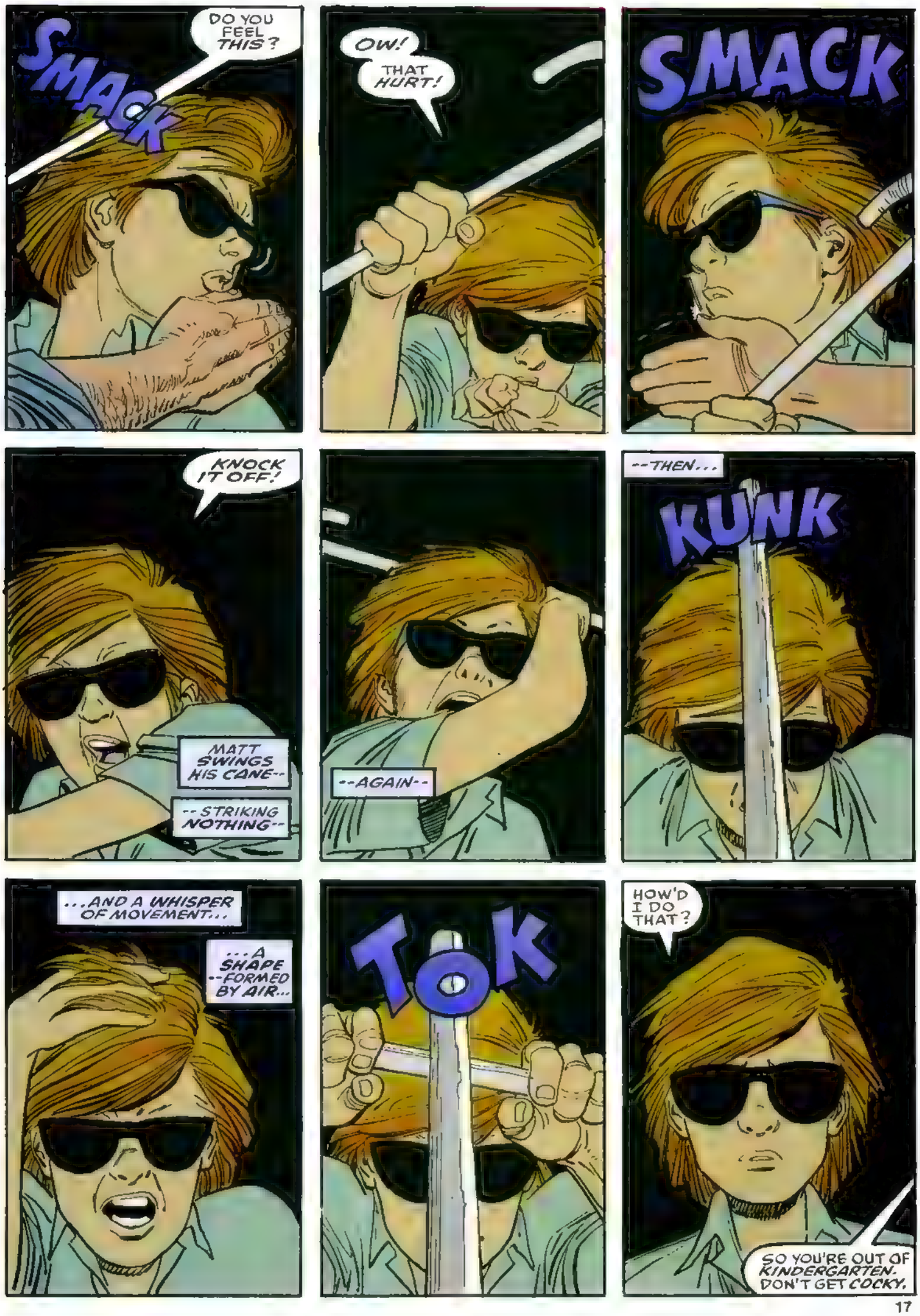

WEEKS GO BY.
EVERYBODY PITIES MATT.
EVERYBODY WANTS TO HELP HIM CROSS THE STREET.

BUT THERE IS NO PITY IN THE MAN WHO TRAILS HIM.

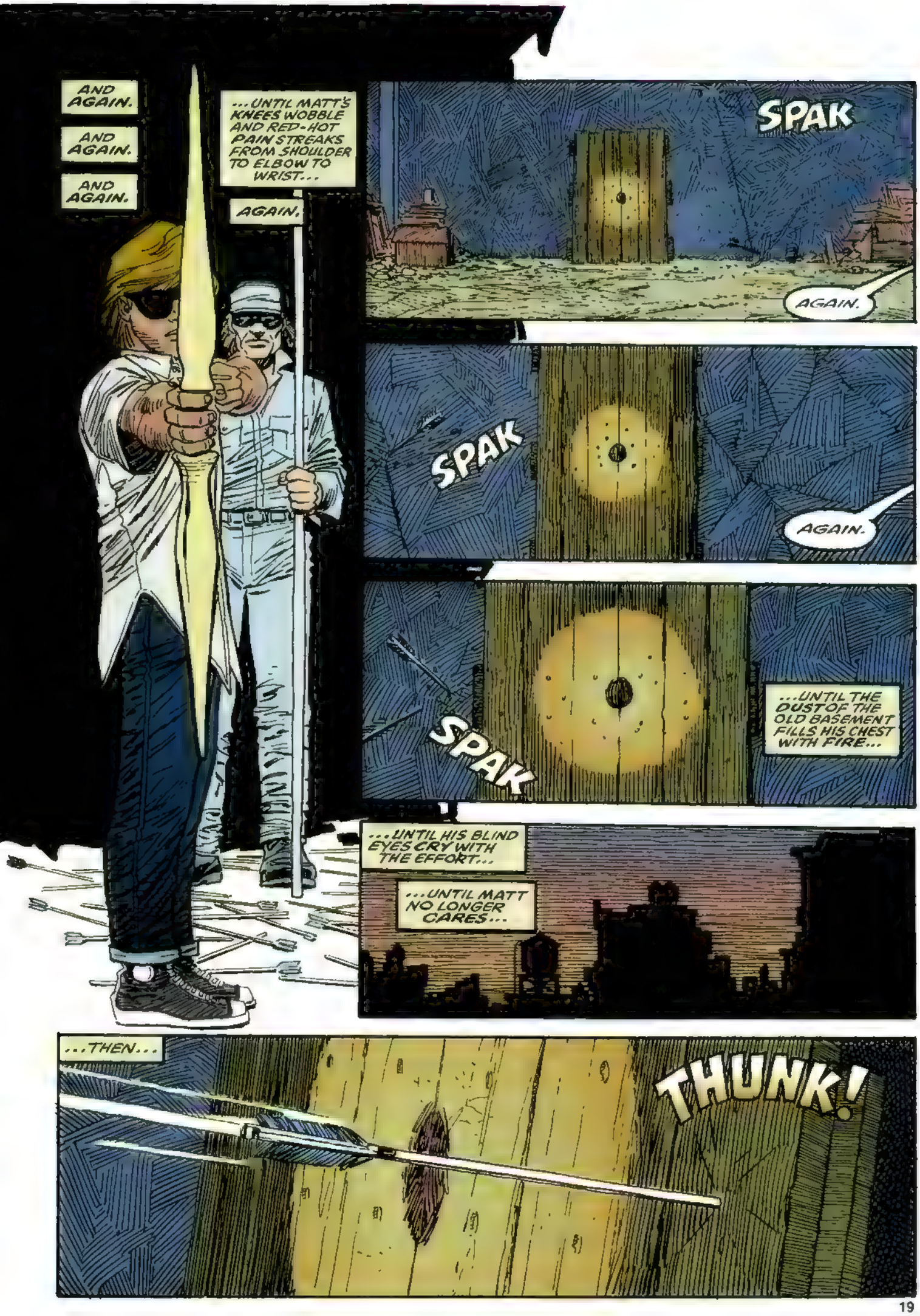
NO PITY. NO MERCY.
ONLY COLD CLEAR PURPOSE.
AND NOW THE TIME HAS COME TO SEE WHAT MATT MURDOCK IS MADE OF.

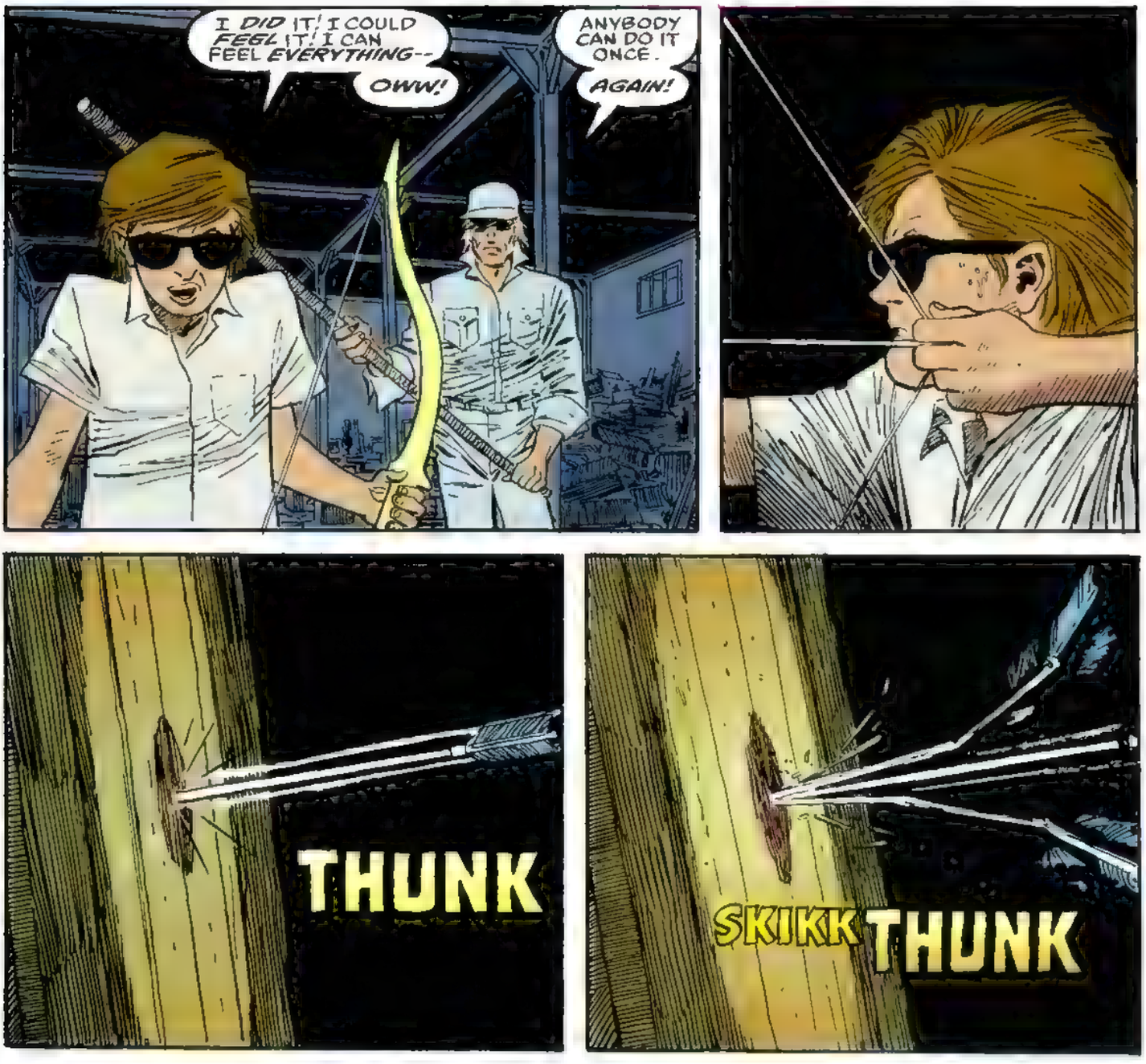
THAT NIGHT.
IN THE GYM.
IT USED TO BE MATT'S FAVORITE PLACE--
--BUT NOW IT'S FILLED WITH CRIES OF FRUS-TRATION-- TEARFUL FURY--
--AND LOW SOBS THAT SPEAK OF DEFEAT.
HE CAN'T SEE.
HE CAN'T SEE.
HE'S USELESS.
QUIT FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF.
GET UP.
WHO?...
HE CALLS HIMSELF STICK...

...AND ONCE HE STARTS TALKING, HE DOESN'T STOP.
HE TAKES MATT TO A DIRTY, DUSTY BASEMENT.
I WAS BORN BLIND, KID. ON THE STREET. AND I MADE MY WAY. SO DON'T GIVE WITH ANY MORE BELLY-ACHING OR I'LL FLATTEN YOU.
YOU'LL TRAIN HERE. EVERY SPARE HOUR YOU HAVE. IF YOU'RE GOOD ENOUGH, I'LL MAKE YOU A WARRIOR.
I'M NOT SAYING YOUR CHANCES ARE GOOD. YOU'RE UNDISCIPLINED. INDULGENT. EMOTIONAL. BUT I'M TAKING A CHANCE WITH YOU--BECAUSE I NEED ALL THE HELP I CAN GET.
WHAT KIND OF HELP?
NO QUESTIONS. HOLD OUT YOUR HAND. CONCENTRATE.
FEEL THE AIR.
BUT THERE'S NO WIND.
SHUT UP. CONCENTRATE.
THE AIR'S FILLING THE ROOM.
ONE WALL'S CLOSER THAN THE OTHER. FEEL IT.
NOW THE OTHER WALL. FEEL IT.
CONCENTRATE.
CONCENTRATE.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING THERE!


SMACK
DO YOU FEEL THIS?
OW! THAT HURT!
SMACK
KNOCK IT OFF!
MATT SWINGS HIS CANE--
--STRIKING NOTHING--
--AGAIN--
--THEN...
KUNK
...AND A WHISPER OF MOVEMENT...
...A SHAPE --FORMED BY AIR...
TOK
HOW'D I DO THAT?
SO YOU'RE OUT OF KINDERGARTEN. DON'T GET COCKY.

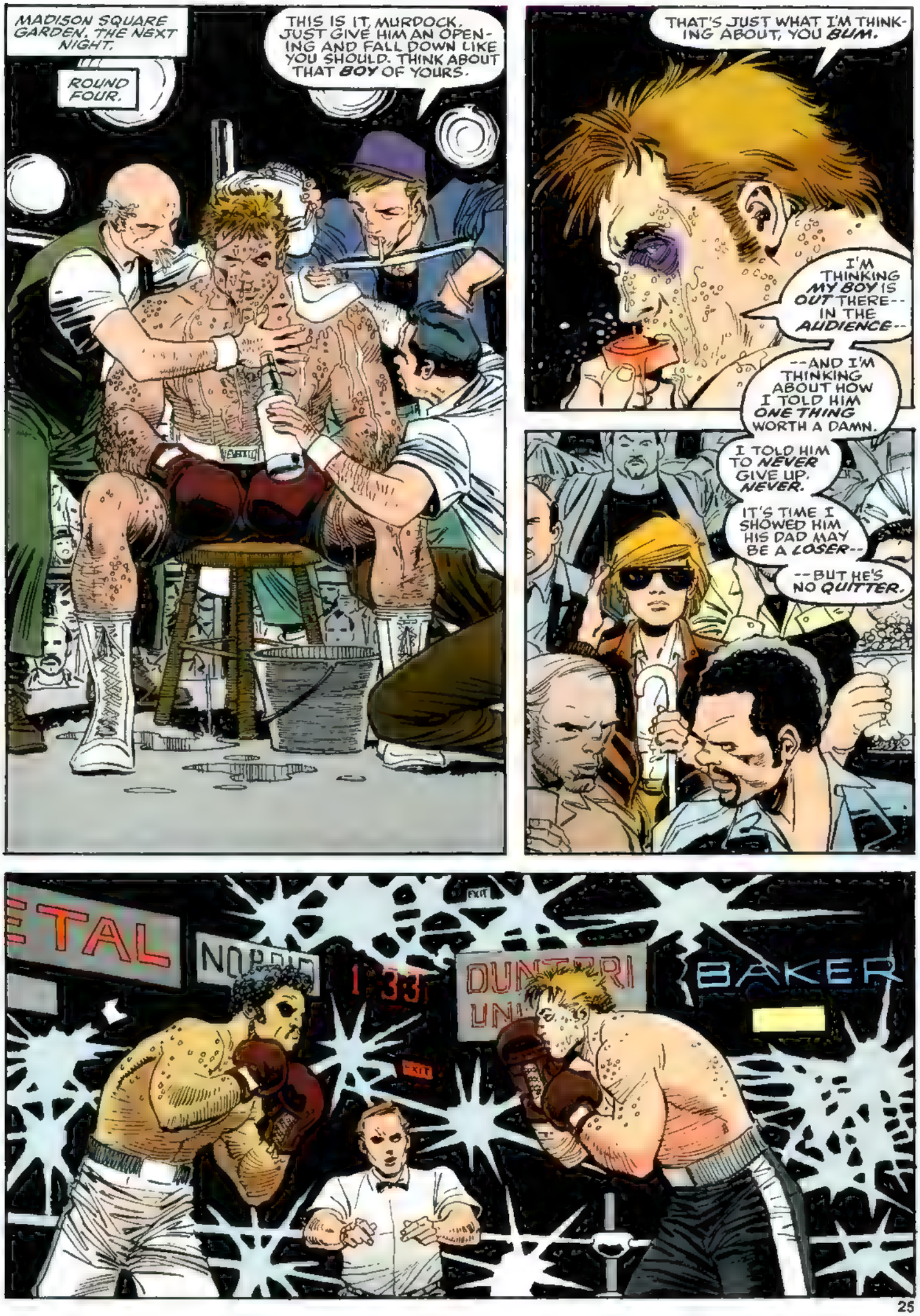
MONTHS FALL AWAY. HINTS OF A NEW WORLD PLAY AT MATT'S MIND.
IN THE GRUFF, UNFORGIVING VOICE OF HIS TEACHER-- MATT FINDS HOPE...
CREAK OF WOOD, WIRE-- NO, CATGUT, STRETCHED. THAT'S A BOW YOU'RE HOLDING.
WHAT THE HECK ARE A COUPLE OF BLIND GUYS SUPPOSED TO DO WITH A BOW?
THIS...
THUNK
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. FIND THE TARGET. SMELL IT. FEEL ITS SHAPE.
CONCENTRATE.
KASHH
NO GOOD. GO AGAIN.

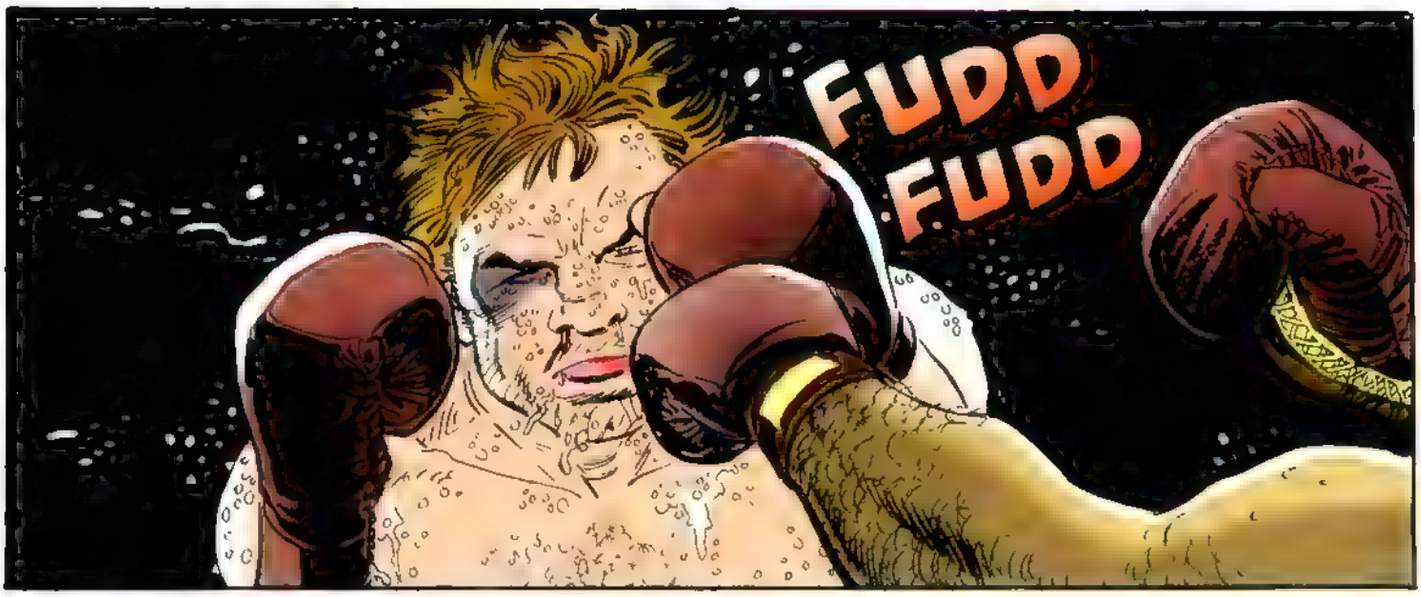

AND AGAIN.
AND AGAIN.
AND AGAIN.
...UNTIL MATT'S KNEES WOBBLE AND RED-HOT PAIN STREAKS FROM SHOULDER TO ELBOW TO WRIST...
AGAIN.
SPAK
AGAIN.
SPAK
AGAIN.
SPAK
...UNTIL THE DUST OF THE OLD BASEMENT FILLS HIS CHEST WITH FIRE...
...UNTIL HIS BLIND EYES CRY WITH THE EFFORT...
...UNTIL MATT NO LONGER CARES...
...THEN...
THUNK!


I DID IT! I COULD FEEL IT! I CAN FEEL EVERYTHING--
OWW!
ANYBODY CAN DO IT ONCE.
AGAIN!
THUNK
SKIKK
THUNK
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, JACK MURDOCK FINDS HIS SON ASLEEP, EXHAUSTED.
A FINE BOY, HE THINKS. STUDYING LIKE A DEMON.
HE'S RIGHT.
BUT MATT'S STUDIES GO FAR BEYOND HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY AND LAW...
...INTO A REALM OF NEAR-MAGIC.
AND STICK WAITS.
AND HOPES.

THE NIGHTS ARE THE BEST.
WHEN MATT WAKES BEFORE DAWN--AND, AS ALWAYS, STICK IS THERE--
--AND THEY DANCE, UNSEEN...

CENTRAL PARK. A SPRING MORNING.
JACK MURDOCK JOGS. A FIGHTER HAS TO KEEP IN SHAPE.
A FIGHTER... HE FEELS LIKE A FIGHTER AGAIN.
SIX VICTORIES IN A ROW. SIX KNOCKOUTS. AT HIS AGE. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE BUT THERE IT IS--
--AND NOW HE'S SET FOR A BOUT AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
HE FEELS YOUNG AGAIN.
LIFE IS GOOD AGAIN.
AND BEST OF ALL, HE HASN'T GOTTEN ORDERS FROM THE FIXER IN MONTHS...
YOU'RE PUSHING YOURSELF TOO HARD, MURDOCK. YOU'RE NOT A YOUNG MAN ANYMORE.
I HAVEN'T BEEN DOING SO BAD, FIXER.
OH, COME NOW. ARE YOU SO THICK YOU THINK YOU EARNED THOSE KNOCKOUTS? WHY DO YOU THINK THEY CALL ME THE FIXER?
YOU'RE A SET-UP, OLD MAN. I'VE MADE YOU FLAVOR OF THE MONTH IN THE BOXING WORLD. AND YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME A BUNDLE OF MONEY--
--WHEN YOU THROW TOMORROW'S FIGHT.
NO ARGUMENTS, MURDOCK. THE USUAL THREATS APPLY.


MADISON SQUARE GARDEN. THE NEXT NIGHT.
ROUND FOUR.
THIS IS IT, MURDOCK. JUST GIVE HIM AN OPENING AND FALL DOWN LIKE YOU SHOULD. THINK ABOUT THAT BOY OF YOURS.
THAT'S JUST WHAT I'M THINKING ABOUT, YOU BUM.
I'M THINKING MY BOY IS OUT THERE-- IN THE AUDIENCE--
--AND I'M THINKING ABOUT HOW I TOLD HIM ONE THING WORTH A DAMN.
I TOLD HIM TO NEVER GIVE UP. NEVER.
IT'S TIME I SHOWED HIM HIS DAD MAY BE A LOSER--
--BUT HE'S NO QUITTER.
BAKER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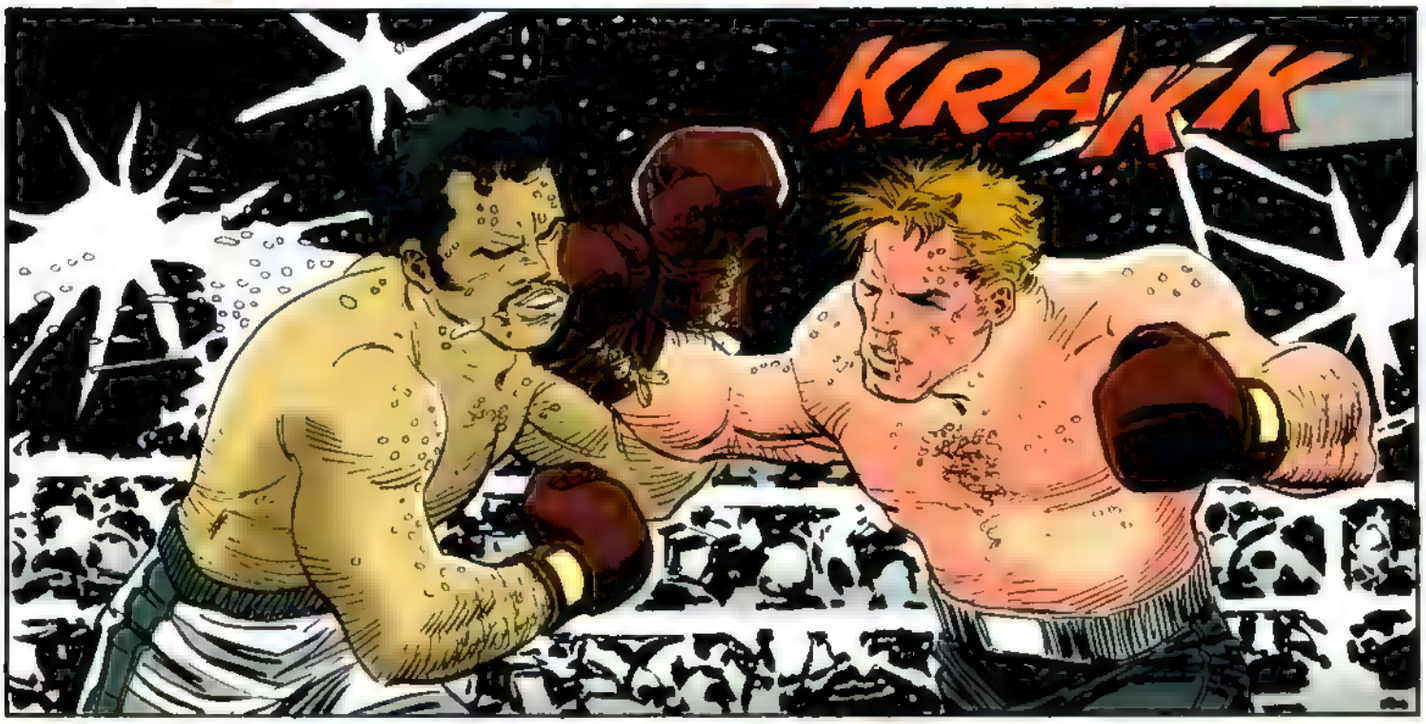
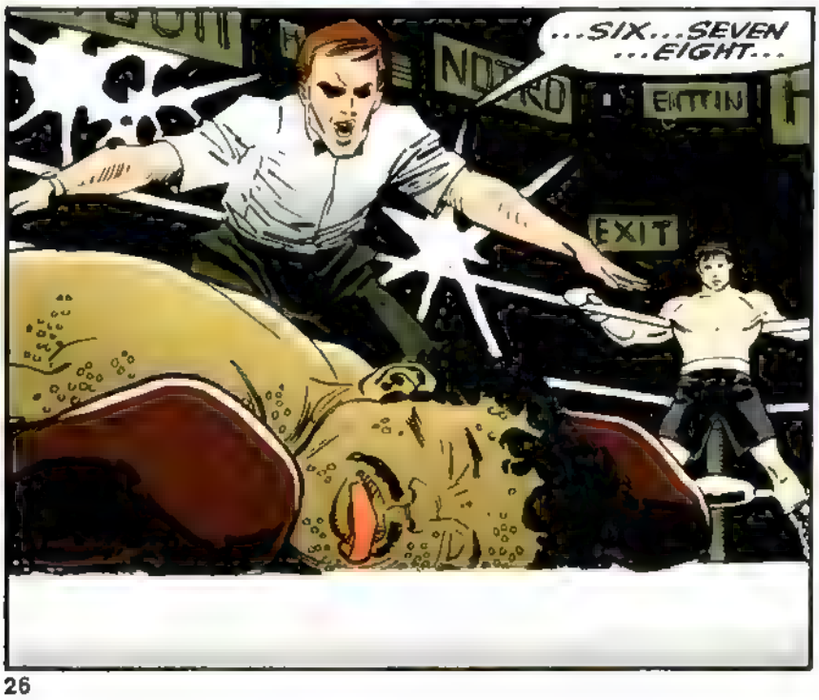
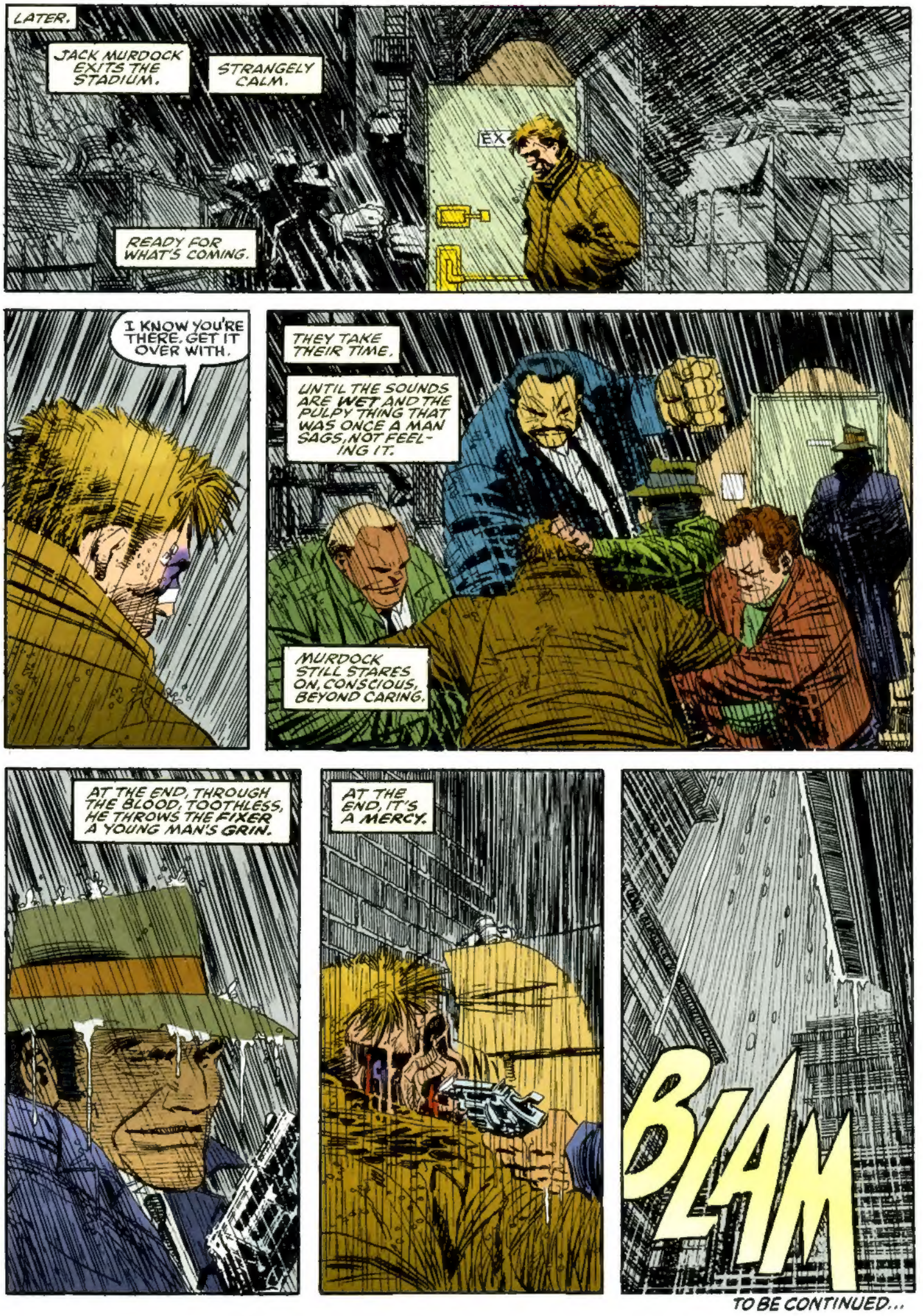
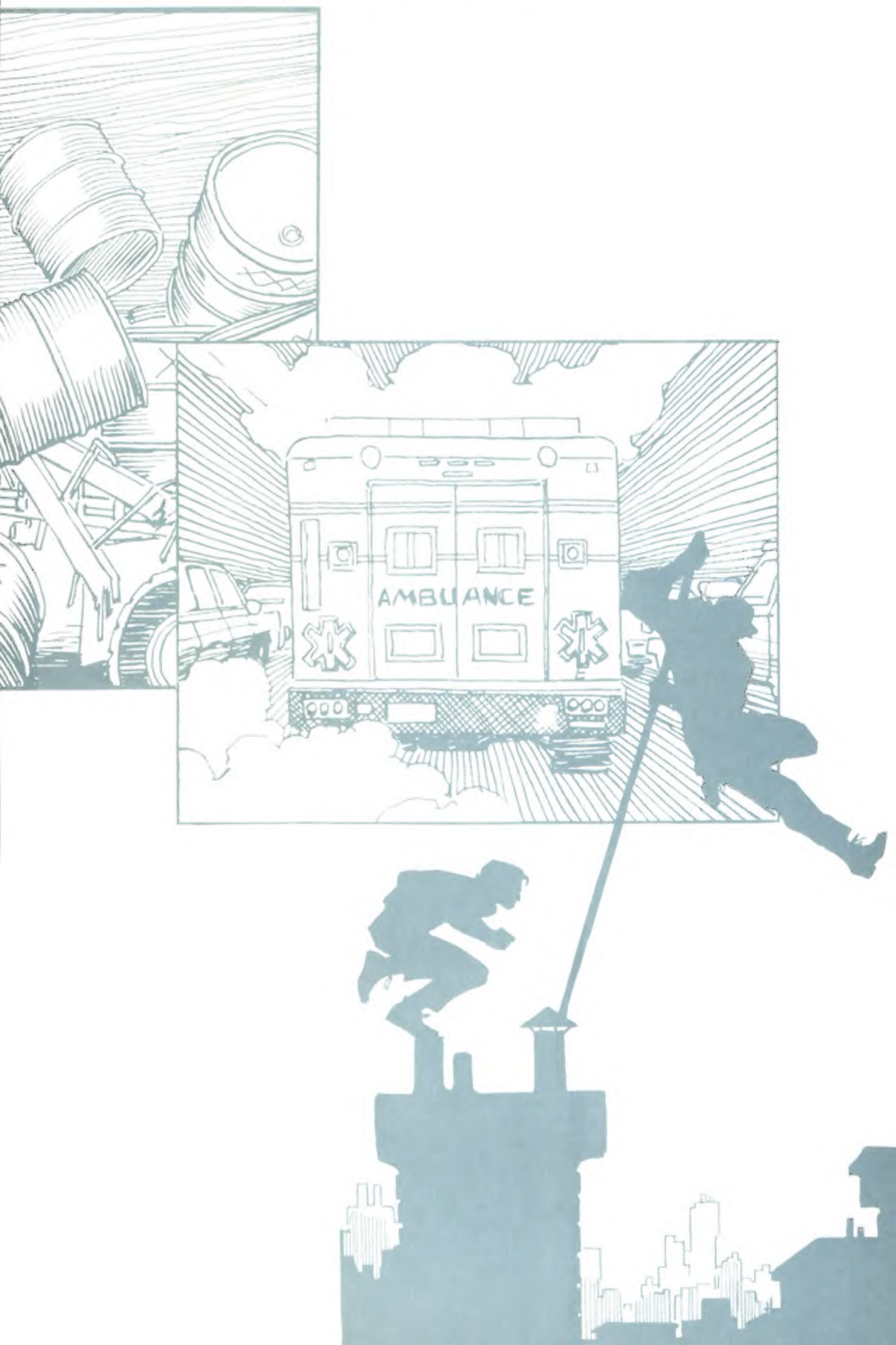

KRAKK


...SIX...SEVEN
...EIGHT...
EXIT

...NINE
...TEN...
HE'S OUT!
BATTLIN' MURDOCK WINS!


LATER.
JACK MURDOCK EXITS THE STADIUM.
STRANGELY CALM.
READY FOR WHAT'S COMING.
EX
I KNOW YOU'RE THERE. GET IT OVER WITH.
THEY TAKE THEIR TIME.
UNTIL THE SOUNDS ARE WET AND THE PULPY THING THAT WAS ONCE A MAN SAGS, NOT FEELING IT.
MURDOCK STILL STARES ON, CONSCIOUS, BEYOND CARING.
AT THE END, THROUGH THE BLOOD, TOOTHLESS, HE THROWS THE FIXER A YOUNG MAN'S GRIN.
AT THE END, IT'S A MERCY.
BLAM
TO BE CONTINUED...


AMBULANCE

NEXT ISSUE

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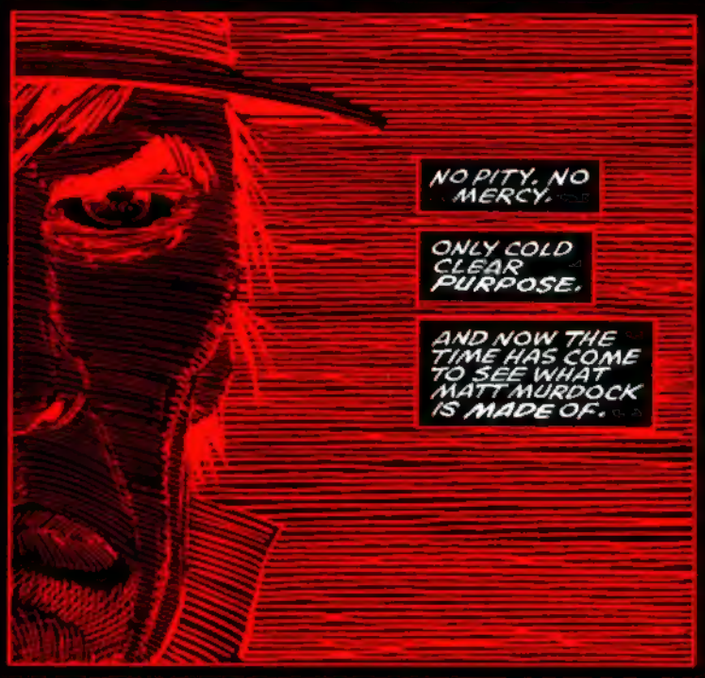

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